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INSIDE



Wedding Haven

The Marianas Visitors Authority will step up its promotions, particularly in the South Korean market, by participating in the Spring WEDDEX 2004 slated for January 28 to February 2, 2004 in Seoul, Korea.

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Go Paperless

Introduced in the late 1990s, payroll cards have taken off in the past two years, especially as the two major credit card companies, Visa and MasterCard, started offering their own branded versions, enabling workers to cash their pay wherever major credit and debit cards are accepted.

Page 12



Shifting Concept

Move over, Ellen DeGeneres, and make way for the younger girls. Way younger, actually, and way different from what most people think of as lesbians.

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'Economy is No. 1 priority'



JAYVEE VALLEJERA/LIBERTY DONES

Members of the 14th House of Representatives pose for a souvenir shot after adjourning yesterday's inaugural session. Below shows the Senate members during their swearing in led by Supreme Court Chief Justice Miguel Demapan. Also shown is Gov. Juan N. Babauta, seated.

Tables are turned in new House

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In a ceremony dominated with assertions on the need to work together to revive the economy, 18 lawmakers of the 14th House of Representatives were sworn into office yesterday, with the new leadership vowing a more cooperative relationship with the Babauta administration.

As expected, Rep. Benigno R. Fitial took over as the new House Speaker, with the backing of 10 supporters. Rep. Timothy P. Villagomez was elected Vice Speaker, while Rep. Oscar M. Babauta was chosen House Floor Leader.

Both Fitial and Babauta regained the posts they had held in the 12th Legislature.

Fitial also announced the chairmanship of the different House committees:

- Ways and Means – Rep. Norman Palacios
- Natural Resources – Rep. Janet U. Maratita
- Health and Welfare – Rep. Crispin

See TABLES on Page 8

Tinian, Rota senators get 'juicy' posts

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Sen. Joaquin G. Adriano formally assumed the Senate presidency following a unanimous vote during yesterday's swearing-in and first regular session of the 14th CNMI Senate.

Adriano (Tinian), takes the place vacated by long-time Senate president Paul A. Manglona (Rota), who now serves as the new Senate floor leader, a position that previously belonged to Adriano.

Meantime, except for newly elected Saipan senator Luis Crisostimo who got the chairmanship of the Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs, all other committee heads are from Tinian and Rota.

Adriano appointed Manglona to head two panels: Rules and Procedures Committee and the newly created Committee on Youth.

Tinian senator Joseph Mendiola is the chair of the Fiscal Affairs Committee.

See TINIAN on Page 8



Fitial vows cooperation with Senate, admin

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The CNMI's ailing economy and the need to work together to address this were the stars in yesterday's inaugural session of the 14th House of Representatives.

House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial set

the tone and direction of the newly inaugurated House by stressing the need for the chamber to work cooperatively with the 14th Senate and the Babauta administration.

The new House Speaker related that Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano, and he had met

See FITAL on Page 8

Ex-BoS president Aldan gets 10 years in prison

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court sentenced former Bank of Saipan president Tomas Aldan yesterday to 10 years in prison, capping the criminal trial proceedings related to the bank fiasco.

Chief Judge Alex R. Munson imposed a five-year jail term on each of the wire fraud and conspiracy to commit

wire fraud charges that Aldan was convicted of. The judge, however, ruled that the two prison terms would run consecutively. This means that Aldan would first serve five years for the first conviction and then another five years for the second conviction. *See related story on page 3.*

Upon his release, Aldan would be on supervised release for three years, the judge said. Munson imposed a three-year

supervised release for each of the two counts against Aldan, but the magistrate said these should be served concurrently.

Munson allowed Aldan to remain free while awaiting the designation of a federal prison facility where the defendant would be imprisoned. During this period, the judge said Aldan should report to the U.S. Marshal Service in person or by telephone every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9am to 11am.

Once Marshal authorities notify Aldan that he would be committed to a designated facility, the defendant should surrender to them, said Munson. The magistrate recommended that Aldan be placed in a federal prison facility in Oregon.

The judge also directed Aldan to pay some \$5.48 million to the Bank of Saipan and \$209,980 to bank customer Michelle Hom, to be paid jointly with co-defendants

See EX-BOS on Page 8

Local

NMI municipal council officials sworn into office

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta administered the oath-taking of Saipan, Northern Islands, Rota, and Tinian municipal council officials yesterday morning, shortly after the inauguration of the members of the 14th CNMI Legislature.

Sworn to office were CNMI and Northern Islands municipal council officials Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero, David Indalecio, and Antonia Tudela; Rota municipal council officials Tom Glenn, Mameto Ayuyu, and Alexander Apatang; and Tinian municipal council officials Jude Hofschneider, Edwain Aldan, and Patrick Manglona.

The swearing-in ceremony began at 12pm with guests, family members, and central government officials witnessing the first organizational session presided by Guerrero at the Municipal Council Office in Chalan Kanoa. The organizational session passed the rules and procedures of the CNMI municipal council.

Guerrero, who was the chair pro-tempore, acknowledged the



EDITH ALEJANDRO

The Saipan Municipal Council members pose with their spouses for a souvenir shot with Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, and Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela.

confidence and trust of his council members in him to lead the office toward accomplishing the Saipan and Northern Islands' goals and objectives for another term.

"We must be mindful of developing a profound working relationship with our executive and legislative branches of government. I see greater involvement in you in lobbying for our legislative initiative empowering our

municipal councils in Saipan, Rota, and Tinian," Guerrero said in his remarks.

He urged members of the CNMI municipal council to participate in greater promotion and advocacy of services and benefits essential for the CNMI people and communities.

"I see greater partnership with our business community to strengthen and enhance our economic bases to rebound from

our ailing economy. I want this council to be pro-active in the development and growth of our CNMI, and Saipan in particular," said Guerrero.

Indalecio, for his part, stressed that his last two terms were effective. "I look forward for better days ahead," he added.

After the swearing in ceremony

and the organizational session, which Gov. Babauta, Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, and Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela attended, members and guests joined the newly inducted officials for lunch.

OB son's alleged attacker pleads not guilty

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Tessfour Michael, the 22-year-old man accused of attacking and seriously wounding the son of House Floor Leader Oscar Babauta last Christmas Day, denied the charges against him during his arraignment at the Superior Court yesterday.

Michael pleaded not guilty to all four criminal counts filed against him by the Attorney General's Office: assault with a dangerous weapon, aggravated assault and battery, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Even before proceeding to trial, however, Michael could face jail terms for his previous conviction on other charges, which include burglary, theft, receiving stolen property and criminal mischief. CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton said he has asked the court to revoke Michael's probation.

Police earlier arrested

Michael for allegedly hitting Oscar Babauta Jr.'s face with a glass bottle. The lawmaker's son had to be transferred from the Commonwealth Health Center to a Guam facility due to the seriousness of his injury. Initial reports said Babauta Jr. sustained a jagged laceration above his left eye, while his left eye possibly leaked fluid.

Police also nabbed TN Onopwi and Anderson C. Ruben after the fray. Witnesses interviewed by police gave varying statements about the incident.

The incident transpired by the Kappon apartment in Chalan Kanoa on the night of Christmas Day. According to Babauta Jr., he was driving home after attending a party at his grandmother's house when two men stopped him on the road. The two allegedly beat him up, with one of them throwing an unopened can of beer at him. After the conduct of investigation, the AGO indicated

in the criminal information that a glass bottle was actually used to hit Babauta Jr.

According to police, Michael claimed that he and Ruben were drinking liquor outside his mother's house when the Babauta Jr.'s pickup truck passed by. At the same time, his friend Onopwi crossed the road ahead of the pickup truck, almost hitting him. Michael alleged that Babauta Jr. then alighted from his vehicle and shouted at Onopwi for blocking the road. Onopwi allegedly kept walking, ignoring the congressman's son.

Michael told police that Babauta Jr. then challenged him to a fight. He allegedly refused to give in by apologizing to Babauta Jr. and greeting the latter "Merry Christmas." Babauta Jr. allegedly approached him when the former's moped-riding companion arrived, but he kept on walking away. Michael claimed he threw a glass of liquor at Babauta Jr. because the latter got close to him.

trib subs

Man allegedly steals eight game birds, hen

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

A 29-year-old man is facing a theft charge for allegedly stealing nine game birds during the wee hours of Nov. 8 last year.

The game birds include eight roosters and a hen, based on an affidavit submitted by police to the Superior Court.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton yesterday filed the criminal case against Richard Quinata A. Santos, who allegedly stole the game birds in Susupe.

Superior Court Associate

Judge Juan T. Lizama recently issued a warrant for Santos' arrest. The judge imposed a \$5,000-bail on Santos and ordered that his travel documents be seized.

The game birds' owner, Roberto C. Senido, told police that he was on a drinking spree with his friends on Nov. 7 at his Susupe residence. He discovered the game birds missing the following night, when he was about to feed them.

On that day, police said it received a telephone call from an anonymous caller, who pointed to Santos as the man who stole the game birds.

Police detective Peter Camacho said he later interviewed one Anthony Kapileo of Susupe, who claimed to have witnessed the alleged theft incident. Kapileo said he recognized Santos as the same man who was also present at his auntie's wedding reception last Nov. 7.

Based on Camacho's affidavit, Kapileo woke up about 1am last Nov. 8 to tend to his kids when he heard a woman's voice cautioning Santos to watch out. The witness claimed seeing Santos holding the game birds that were all separately tied up.

Court junks Aldan’s plea for temporary release



JOHN RAVELO
Former Bank of Saipan president Tomas Aldan steps out of the Horiguchi building after being sentenced to 10 years in prison, capping the criminal trial proceedings related to the bank fiasco. Behind him is his lawyer, Howard Trapp.

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Former Bank of Saipan president Tomas Aldan will go to jail even if he has signified his intention to appeal his conviction and sentence on wire fraud and conspiracy charges, following the federal court’s denial of his request for release during the pendency of his appeal.

Chief Judge Alex R. Munson junked the request filed by Aldan’s lawyer, Howard Trapp, with U.S. prosecutor Patrick Smith vehemently opposing the request.

Citing the Bail Reform Act of 1984, Smith said that Congress had intended that a convict’s release on bail pending appeal be limited to “exceptional circumstances.”

“While the government does not contest that the defendant can meet his burden on the issues of flight risk and danger, the defendant cannot show that a substantial question exists in this case,” Smith said.

In a request filed Friday, Trapp argued that his client does not pose a flight risk or a danger to the community’s safety. Additionally, Trapp said the appeal “is not for the purpose of delay and raises a fairly debatable question of law of a type which, if resolved in favor of Aldan, would result in an order for a new trial.”

Trapp alleged that the court committed prejudicial error in giving out instructions to the jury when it said that the testimony of co-defendant Michael Wilson, who had pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and related charges, could be used as proof of the existence of the conspiracy.

Smith disagreed with Trapp, saying the issue is “not a substantial question of law or fact likely to result in a reversal or a new trial.” Moreso, he said the court appropriately instructed the jury, supporting this contention with a precedent ruling by the U.S. Court of

Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Trapp had supported his argument of prejudicial error by citing a Ninth Circuit model jury instruction, which mentioned that the testimony of a witness who had pleaded guilty is not evidence against the remaining defendants. Trapp said the testimony could only be considered in determining the witness’ credibility.

“Aldan appears to rely on the model jury instructions as if they are Ninth Circuit precedent. But it is clear from the introduction to the Manual of Model Jury Instructions that instructions are models, and that ‘individual drafting and research may be required in a particular case,’ Smith countered, pointing out that model instructions could be modified to adapt a particular case.

“In any event, the court’s instruction complied with the substance of the Model Instructions because the jury was plainly instructed that they were not to consider Wilson’s guilty

plea on the issue of Aldan’s guilt; rather, the evidence was only to be considered on the issue of the existence of the conspiracy. The language of the court’s instruction, adopted from [the precedent ruling], mitigated any risk of unfair prejudice,” he added.

Smith also said Wilson had almost no direct dealings with Aldan, since the former had dealt with co-defendants Bert Douglas Montgomery and DuSean Berkich. He said the prosecution established Aldan’s guilt through the testimony of other witnesses, including BoS officials, employees, and documents.

“Given the strength of the evidence here and the relative roles of Aldan and Wilson in the conspiracy, the purported error made no difference in the outcome of this trial,” the prosecutor said. “The record in this case will never permit a finding that Aldan’s claim of error affected substantial rights.”

Former employees sue Rota’s municipal council

Eight former employees of the Rota Municipal Council have sued the lawmaking body and its members for alleged unlawful termination of their respective employment.

Besides suing the council, the employees’ lawyer, Joseph Horey, named the following council members as defendants: Richard and Jeffrey Manglona, and Balbina Taisacan.

The defendants allegedly terminated the employees from their respective jobs beginning Jan. 12, 2002. Horey alleged that the terminations breached the employees’ employment contracts.

The employees include Sylvan Atalig, Francisca Barcinas, Robert Calvo, Esperansa Cruz, Maria Manglona, Martin Quitugua, Francisco Taga, and Ray Taitague. *(John Ravelo)*

jollibee

goldsgym

DEQ to hold vulnerability training

As a requirement of the Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act that was passed by Congress in 2002, systems serving more than 50,000 persons must complete a vulnerability assessment by Dec. 31st, 2003, while those serving more than 3,300 but less than 5,000 must complete their vulnerability assessment by June 30th, 2004.

In an attempt to effectively assist and provide support to water systems in completing and submitting their vulnerability assessments on time, the Environmental Protection Agency has decided to fund a security training.

On Jan. 16, 2004, all public water system owners, operators,

managers, consultants, or contractors doing business in the CNMI, are encouraged to attend a Vulnerability Training Workshop that will take place at the Aqua Resort Club (Rey Lounge) from 8:30am to 12:30pm. The doors will open for registration at 8 am.

Participants are limited to no more than three from each public water system, consulting/contracting firm.

“So that we may know beforehand how many participants to expect, we would like to have you pre-register and pre-pay a fee of \$10 at the DEQ office,” the agency said in a statement.

For more information, contact Joe Kaipat at 664-8500.



Police probe Triple J burglary

Authorities are investigating a burglary incident in Lower Base where unknown suspects ransacked a Triple J Wholesale container and carted off over \$5,000 worth of merchandise.

Sgt. Tom Blas, Jr., police department spokesperson, said unidentified suspects stole 19 cases of baby back ribs, three cases of chicken wings, three cases of mahi-mahi fish fillets, four cases of game hens, and other items.

Triple J Wholesale reported on Friday that its refrigerated container, parked outside its Lower Base warehouse, had been burglarized. Numerous items, worth over \$5,000, were reportedly stolen from the container.

Blas said that Triple J’s operations manager secured the container Thursday in the presence of the warehouse supervisor around 5:30pm. The following day, when Triple J Wholesale employees returned to work at about 7:20am, they found the container opened and its padlock removed.

“The incident is still under investigation and no arrest has been made yet. Anyone who may have information on the said case can call the police department or the NMI Crime Stoppers,” Blas said.

He urged the community to help authorities resolve the incident since a similar case was reported to the Department of Public Safety on Dec. 15, 2003 where over \$10,000 worth of meat products were also stolen from the area. *(Edith G. Alejandro)*

Woman loses valuables to snatcher

A 27-year-old woman lost all her valuables to an unknown suspect while she was walking on a beach area in Chalan Kanoa Thursday afternoon, police reported yesterday.

The complainant, Hong Gu Cui, lost her purse containing her passport, labor papers, house keys, and cash to a suspect described as between 5’5 and 5’7 in height, dark skinned, with straight neck-length hair, and was wearing black short sleeves shirt with green, black and white shorts.

DPS spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas, Jr. said that at about 2:54pm Thursday, Cui was walking on the beach behind the Town House Center in Chalan Kanoa when an unidentified male came from behind and grabbed her plastic bag.

Her bag contained her valuables including her purse. *(Edith G. Alejandro)*

Purse-grabber strikes in San Antonio

A 26-year-old woman lost cash and valuables to an unidentified suspect who grabbed her purse while she was walking in San Antonio Thursday night.

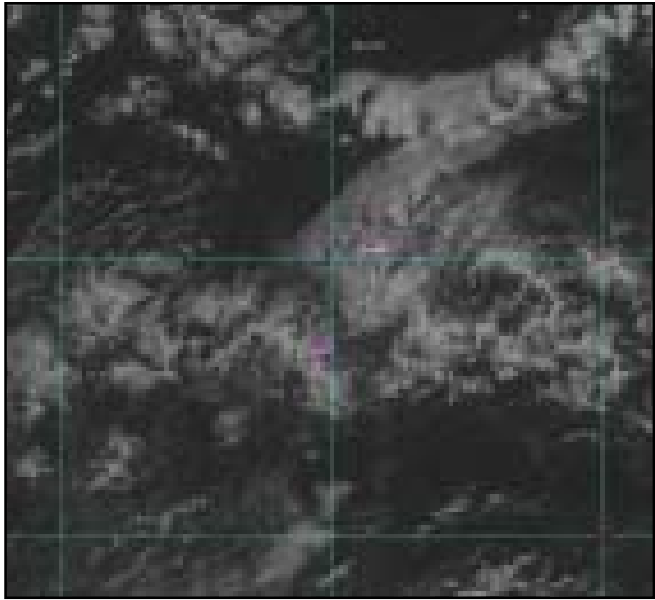
According to victim Haimei Qian, she was walking on her way to a grocery store in San Antonio near the Seventh-day Adventist when a man approached her from behind.

The victim added that the suspect grabbed her purse and ran to the beach area. The suspect was described to be around 5’9 in height, has a short hair, and was wearing a black shirt.

“The incident is still under investigation and no arrest was made. We are requesting the community to help us and call the NMI Crime Stoppers for information,” said Blas.

Individuals who may have information about this incident and other cases are urged to call the Department of Public Safety at 664-9042 or the Crime Stoppers’ tips line at 234-7272. Rewards are given to information leading to an arrest. *(Edith G. Alejandro)*

WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME:1:00 A.M. JANUARY 13, 2004
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends from 1n130e to 2n171e. Trade wind convergence north of the trough is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between 3n and 7n from 131e to 145e. This activity includes the republic of Palau and Yap State. Another area of trade wind showers is located near Pohnpei and Kosrae between 4n and 6n from 156e to 164e. A trough of low pressure is producing widely scattered showers in the Marshall Islands between the Equator and 13n from 165e to 180.

SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 mph.

GUAM AND ROTA
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 mph.

PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast 15 kt.

POHNPEI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.

YAP AND ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast 15-20 kt.

KOSRAE
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.

CHUUK
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.

MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.

	CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
	Auckland	Partly Cloudy	77F (25C)	63F (17C)
	Beijing	Sunny	27F (-3C)	12F (-11C)
	Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	66F (19C)	53F (12C)
	Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82F (28C)	68F (20C)
	London, England	Cloudy	49F (9C)	38F (3C)
	Los Angeles	Sunny	73F (23C)	49F (9C)
	Manila	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	67F (19C)
	Melbourne	Sunny	74F (23C)	55F (13C)
	Miami	Sunny	74F (23C)	57F (14C)
	New York City	Partly Cloudy	40F (4C)	20F (-7C)
	Osaka	Partly Cloudy	43F (3C)	18F (-6C)
	Paris	Sunny	42F (6C)	25F (-4C)
	Pusan	Partly Cloudy	46F (8C)	24F (-4C)
	Rome	Cloudy	56F (13C)	45F (7C)
	Salem, Oregon	Rain	50F (10C)	42F (6C)
	San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	62F (17C)	52F (11C)
	Seoul	Snow	36F (2C)	15F (-9C)
	Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	43F (6C)	34F (1C)
	Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	50F (10C)	29F (-2C)

DPS: Curfew violators' parents to be charged

By **EDITH G. ALEJANDRO**
REPORTER

Parents of curfew violators would be meted out appropriate charges if their children continue to flout the law despite earlier warnings issued against them,

according to the Department of Public Safety.

DPS spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said authorities have already warned the parents of more than 10 minors who were earlier arrested for curfew violations.

Despite the warnings, Blas said parents continue to allow their children to stay out and loiter inside establishments even during curfew hours.

Because of this, Blas urged parents to cooperate with law enforcers. "If they keep failing

to cooperate with us, they would be charged with child neglect and other charges appropriate to the circumstances when their children are apprehended for curfew violations," he explained.

According to the spokesperson, more than 10

minors who were caught loitering in establishments and other area during curfew hours have been identified, including their parents' identities.

He said that due to the increasing number of criminal activities involving juveniles, the DPS would continue its random curfew inspection at selected areas.

"Police are running into the same incidents despite the warnings and earlier arrests. This time, we would be forced to lodge appropriate charges against parents and their children," said Blas.

Authorities have been thoroughly inspecting several hotspot believed to be havens of criminal activities.

Blas said areas that would remain under police surveillance are Garapan, Koblerville, Chalan Kanoa, Susupe, and other villages where criminal activities commonly happen.

"We will continue our operations against curfew violators as long as curfew hours are in effect. We will randomly check areas with high incidences of crimes and the operations will be done simultaneously," he explained.

The DPS said that minors aged 15 years old and under

should not be out on the streets between 9pm to 5am Mondays through Thursdays, and from 10pm to 5am Fridays through Sundays.

For minors 16 years old and above, curfew hours are from 10pm to 5am Mondays through Thursdays, and from 11pm to 5am Fridays through Sundays. During these times, minors should not be seen outside their homes and loitering around establishments and streets.

In light of the ongoing crackdown against curfew violators, the DPS warned parents, legal guardians, sponsors and any adult in custody of a minor, especially those with conditions from the court, to be extra aware of the curfew hours.



BACK TO SCHOOL

Garapan Elementary School sixth grade students who belong to different classes are excited to see each other on their first back-to-school day Monday. From left: Jesselyn Dris, Desiree Blas, Junelle Roman, and Crystal Cabrera.

LIBERTY DONES

Roman Benavente elected BOE chairman

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Top reelection winner Roman C. Benavente is now the new Board of Education chairman following a unanimous vote by his colleagues yesterday.

DPS investigates arson case

By **EDITH G. ALEJANDRO**
REPORTER

A group of teenagers in Chalan Kanoa are now the subject of a Department of Public Safety investigation for alleged involvement in an arson incident in the early hours of Friday morning.

DPS spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said the identities of the minors are now with the police force but follow-up investigation is still being done to determine the extent of their culpability.

According to Blas, six to seven minors were seen fleeing from Chalan Kanoa near the U.S. Postal Office after a vehicle was set on fire around 1:30am Friday.

Police officers and fire-fighters were dispatched to the Pacific Drilling Ltd. barracks in CK near the USPO following an arson report.

According to the vehicle's owner, Kaibeer M. Abamed, 37, he parked his car at the area around 10:30pm Thursday and went to his room to rest.

Several hours later, he heard

Voted as vice chairman is newly elected BOE member Dino Jones.

Rota representative Marja Lee Taitano, who also won in the November 2003 elections for another term, is the board's secretary and treasurer.

Members are former

loud popping noises, prompting him to check the immediate premises. He then saw his vehicle, a 1993 Hyundai Excel with license plate ABX-944, on fire.

With the help of friends, the victim was able to extinguish the fire before it could spread to the other structures in the area. The vehicle sustained extensive damage. Abamed then called for police assistance.

Witnesses to the incident told investigators that the minors were seen fleeing from the site and running north toward the post office area right before the incident.

According to Blas, no arrest has been made yet but investigation is ongoing. He urged individuals who may have additional information about the incident to contact the Thief Apprehension Select Coalition and the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042.

Information can also be forwarded to the NMI Crime Stoppers tips line at 234-7272. All calls are anonymous and rewards are given for information leading to an arrest.

chairman Herman T. Guerrero and Tinian's Frances Diaz.

Benavente has not named committee chairpersons. He topped the election last year, with some 4,500—ensuring himself another four years on the board.

The new board members were sworn in by Associate Justice Alexandro C. Castro during yesterday's meeting held at the Public School System building on Capitol Hill.

During the meeting, education commissioner Rita H. Inos recognized the outstanding

service given to PSS by outgoing BOE member Esther Fleming, as well as Taitano, and Benavente.

This developed as the board recently approved several amendments to its by-laws and existing rules, including the re-creation of a capital improvement project committee.

In December 2002, the board moved to reduce the number of its committees from six to three in

efforts to ensure efficient operation.

The BOE formed the fiscal and personnel committee; curriculum, instruction, and assessment, headed by Marja Lee; and school reform and parental involvement, chaired by Roman Benavente.

The board used to have other committees such as CIP, Head Start and federal programs, and Legislative and intergovernmental committees.



Benavente

dynasty

CARS UNLIMITED

Opinion

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MEMBER

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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Taking AIDS seriously

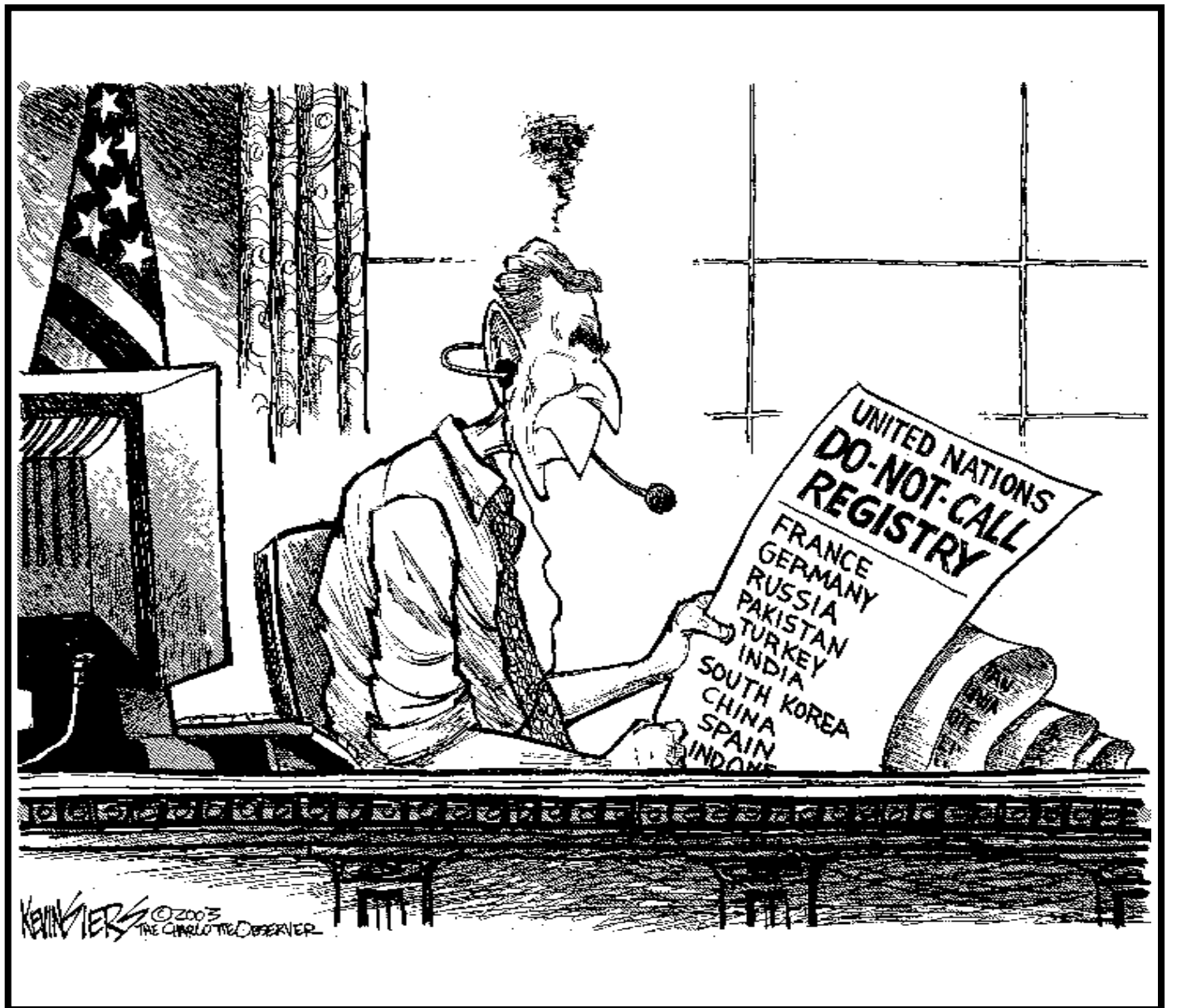
The World Health Organization this week announced an ambitious plan to treat 3 million AIDS victims in the developing world with antiretroviral drugs by the end of 2005. That's only half of the people who desperately need care, but it's 10 times as many patients as are currently receiving these life-sustaining therapies. In sub-Saharan Africa, in fact, only 50,000 people are getting care. As a result 8,000 people die every day—people who could be saved—and societies are collapsing. The WHO plans to put the emergency response skills it developed in connection with the SARS outbreak to work in countries hard hit by HIV. It aims to deliver, in large volumes, a standardized package of antiretroviral therapies and to train local health-care workers in the delivery of these therapies and related services. The new urgency at WHO is welcome, and its plan seems well conceived and deserving of support.

Treating people with AIDS in Africa is a problem of such magnitude that it can induce a certain paralysis in policymakers, many of whom have fallen back on prevention as the only viable way to stop the pandemic. Yet at a certain point—a point long since past—it becomes immoral to focus narrowly on preventing further infection, as governments are now recognizing. It also doesn't work; people are more likely to come in for testing—and so further the goal of prevention—if they know treatment is available for those in need. Nor are the cost of drugs or the sorry state of Africa's health infrastructure excuses for inaction. Drug prices will continue to drop the more people are treated, and infrastructure will just have to be built.

In this country, President Bush's much-trumpeted global AIDS initiative is mired in a spat over funding levels. Bush has sought a little more than \$2 billion for the first year of his five-year, \$15 billion program, a level that has Democrats and AIDS advocates crying foul. The administration argues that Africa's health infrastructure cannot absorb larger sums of money in the early years of the program, so it means to ramp up spending over time.

The real problem, though, seems to lie not in Africa but in the administration's inability to distribute the money. In fact, at this stage, there is reason for concern about whether even the lower funding levels will actually get spent in the first year.

Washington Post



Annan lays out AIDS crisis in stark terms

By JOSEPH DOLMAN

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan behaved in shocking fashion this week. He threw aside 20 years worth of diplomatic argle-bargle and blurted out God's ugly truth about the war against AIDS.

By the United Nations' own standards, he declared, the fight to defeat the virus was failing.

His new tactic of vigorous candor might ultimately come to be regarded as a watershed moment in the long — and so far losing — struggle to beat back one of the worst pandemics in human history.

Gone were the usual hollow pleas to keep hope alive. Gone was the Greek chorus of public-health functionaries, telling us that hard-hit countries were finally beginning to mobilize. Gone were the benign public expressions of faith that rich donor nations would someday wake up and save Africa.

The main theme has abruptly changed.

"We are not on track to begin reducing the scale and impact of the epidemic by 2005," Annan told the General Assembly, in a reference to the United Nations' own timetable. "By that date, we should have cut the number of young people infected by HIV in the worst affected nations. We should have halved the rate at which infants contract HIV. We should have comprehensive care programs in place." But none of this has happened.

What kind of job has the world done to roll back the advance of AIDS?

Peter Piot of UNAIDS told a press conference after Annan's address on Monday that the world's nations in aggregate have earned barely passing marks. No country gets an A, he said.

Richard Feachem of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS was less sanguine. "We spent the first two decades of this pandemic sitting on our hands and doing very little to contain it," he said. But might this really be a watershed?

Yes, it might. That's because Annan and the constellation around him didn't just acknowledge failure on Monday and stalk off the dais. Instead, he coupled his remarks with a refreshingly gutsy plan to provide HIV-slowing drugs to 3 million people, most of them in Africa, within two years.

If 3 million doesn't sound like a big deal on a continent where 30 million human beings live with HIV today, bear in mind that just 4.1 million of Africa's HIV-infected population at the moment need

antiretroviral drug therapy. And bear in mind that just 50,000 people — 1 percent of those who require urgent care now — are getting it.

This could be a very big deal.

But its success depends on the outcome of two gigantic tasks. The first one involves a new role for the World Health Organization. This agency always before has tended to move at a civilized diplomatic pace — also known as slow-motion.

While emergency-room doctors measure their progress in hours, the WHO has tended to gauge the progress of its missions in eons. And, true to its diplomatic underpinnings, it seems to have worked diligently over the years not to pick nasty fights with even the loopy heads of state.

But now, under its new chief, Jong-wook Lee, the WHO is planning to take a more active role in the AIDS fight. Someday soon, it will deliver more than advice. It will deliver antiretroviral drugs. Or at the least it will go into countries and build the infrastructures that will enable local doctors themselves to distribute life-prolonging medicine.

"For the first time," Piot said, "the stars are getting into the right configuration." The cost of antiretroviral drugs has dropped from thousands of dollars a year to about \$300. Doctors have simplified anti-HIV drug regimens from a hopeless mess involving numerous medications and time-sensitive schedules to just one pill a day in some cases. Which means it is now possible for a well-coordinated and generously funded effort to provide HIV treatment fast where it's needed.

Which brings us to the second risk.

Even if the WHO can shake off its bureaucratic lethargy and work more like MASH and less like a state board of medical examiners, what does it plan to do for money? On Monday, the implication was clear. Unless the United States, Europe and an assortment of other nations and private donors come through in a major way, the effort will fail. At the moment, the outcome is anybody's guess.

It's a funny thing. For years, the public-health establishment has urged a policy of honesty and pragmatism. But it never quite leveled with us about its own stark limitations. Now it has. And now we know that, unless we make some changes quick, the daily death toll of about 8,000 lost to AIDS will continue.

Dolman is a columnist and member of Newsday's editorial board.

UN revival requires US commitment

By **Stephen Schlesinger**
LOS ANGELES TIMES

“Four times in the modern age,” English historian John Keegan has written, “men have sat down to reorder the world—at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 after the Thirty Years War, at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars, in Paris in 1919 after World War I and in San Francisco in 1945 after World War II.” Such is the march of human history that all of these events—except for the most recent one—collapsed in disagreements that eventually led to renewed war.

The ultimate outcome of the San Francisco Conference is still not known. However, what happened there that produced the last of these grand compacts, the United Nations, has already had an enormous impact over the last six decades. Indeed, the founding of the United Nations in the age of nuclear weaponry—far more sinister circumstances than any faced by those earlier meetings—is affecting the survival or demise of humanity.

The United Nations and its labors have become the background noise of our global age. It is truly ubiquitous. It has overseen 40 years of decolonization around the planet; sent peacekeepers to places such as Cambodia, Cyprus and Sinai; helped end apartheid in South Africa via sanctions. The United Nations’ World Health Organization was critical in eradicating smallpox and is on the verge of stamping out polio; its World Food Program feeds hungry people in Africa; its U.N. Development Program sends more multilateral aid dollars abroad than any nation.

People forget that before the United Nation’s founding, there was no truly functioning international organization (except for the creaky, faltering League of Nations). This meant that for many decades there was no place for nations to go in global crises.

Today, after half a century of the United Nations, few of us are unaware that this aging experiment in global society exists and has given some modicum of hope to the world—despite a dearth of financial resources and the brickbats tossed at it by American politicians. It has become the world’s geopolitical emergency room. The question is whether it can survive.

Right-wing demagogues in our land have so unremittingly denigrated the organization for so long—calling it bloated, anti-American, a body that wastes time on speechmaking, abdicates its responsibilities and remains out of touch—that leading members of the Senate now routinely dismiss its importance and argue that it unnecessarily limits our sovereignty.

Furthermore, unilateralism is back in fashion. The Bush administration, after the attacks of Sept. 11, has promulgated a doctrine of preventive war that allows the United States to go into battle whenever it decides against whomever it wishes, regardless of whether there is a legitimate provocation. Recently one of Bush’s hard-line appointees, Richard Perle, publicly derided the United Nations as being as ineffectual as the League of Nations. And last spring, the United States brazenly bypassed the U.N. Security Council to invade Iraq, relying on its preemptive doctrine. Tuesday, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said this crisis was a “fork in the road” for the organization, as decisive as the United Nations’ founding.

The sad fact is that our country would probably not pass the same U.N. Charter today that the U.S. Senate ratified by an overwhelming vote, 89-2, in 1945. Even putting aside its lone-cowboy maneuvers, if Washington had wanted to reinvent the United Nations it would have been virtually impossible to persuade the 191 nations of the world again to draft a charter for the security of the Earth because of the sheer number of countries and the profusion of political differences. (Originally, the organization had 50 members.)

As we look back on the United Nations’ creation, we should realize how fortunate we were to get it in the first place. It took a grand vision, formidable planning and brilliant political leadership from two American presidents—Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman—to turn the organization into reality. Having endured the most calamitous war in history, this World War II generation extracted from the human propensity for devastation the right lesson for our time.

If we are to revive the role of the United Nations today as a peacemaker and security guarantor, the United States, as the only superpower on the planet, must again commit itself to the organization. President Bush himself has slowly come to this realization in the Iraq crisis. He is now seeking to reinvolve our fate with the United Nations because it offers political legitimacy for the American occupation of Iraq. And beyond Iraq, the United Nations bestows cover for various other U.S. global missions, allowing Washington to save taxpayers’ dollars and the lives of its soldiers.

Instead of taking on international ventures alone, we are able to share the burdens of the work to stop bloodshed, reconstruct societies, police conflicts, train armies, provide legal frameworks, uphold governance standards and promote human rights. The creation of the United Nations is as timely now as it was 58 years ago.

Schlesinger is the director of the World Policy Institute at the New School University and author of “Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations.”

Bush gambled big—and lost

What a difference a year makes. On Sept. 12, 2002, President Bush traveled to the United Nations and declared that the world body would be “irrelevant” if it didn’t jump on his war bandwagon. The United Nations said “no,” the war started, and yet Bush went back anyway, asking the suddenly relevant United Nations for help.

Why did he do it? Easy. He’s in big trouble. According to a new Gallup Poll, his approval/disapproval rating is 50/47. Indeed, he loses in head-to-head match-ups with both Wesley Clark and John Kerry—who, perhaps not coincidentally, are the two candidates in the race who went off to fight in Vietnam, back in the days when baby boomers had to decide whether to risk everything for their country.

Bush is in trouble because he gambled, gambled big—and lost. He overplayed his war cards.

After 9/11, the world rallied to America’s side. Foreigners laid wreaths and lighted candles in front of U.S. embassies; the French newspaper *Le Monde* published a front-page editorial headlined, “We are all Americans.” The German foreign minister, a member of the Green Party, sat in the Oval Office, wearing red, white and blue ribbons, and offered “unlimited solidarity.” NATO mobilized for America. The United Nations condemned the 9/11 attack and endorsed American action against the terrorists.

Within weeks, the Taliban and al-Qaida were gone from power in Afghanistan. If Bush had stopped there, he could have seized the moment to build a new world order based on collective defense against terrorism, a global alliance of countries wanting their big-city skylines to remain intact. And 90 percent of the countries in the world would have clamored to join, isolating the true rogues.

But instead, he went down a different path. Spurning the multilateral approach that worked in Afghanistan—and still works, as measured by the polynational contingent of troops pulling peacekeeping duty to this day—he decided that the United States would go after Iraq, with or without the world. His neoconservative advisers and propagandists convinced him that he was another Winston Churchill, destined for world-historical greatness—if he just followed their unilateral-war guidance.

So the Texan spent 2002 campaigning for a fight with Iraq. He gained support in the United States, even as he lost it around the world. Muslim allies such as Turkey peeled away. The U.N.

A new disciplined day in America

TEN - HUT!
Location: Campaign HQ of Gen. Wesley K. Clark.
Time: 0500 Hours.
Columnist reporting for interview, sir.

At ease, son.
Request permission to interview the general, sir.
Permission granted. Smoke ‘em if you got ‘em.
Thank you, sir. First question: What do you think is the biggest problem facing the country today?

We’re soft, that’s what wrong with us. We have no discipline. We’ve gotten flabby and lazy.

So what would you do about that, general?
Do about it? I’ll tell you what I’ll do about it — boot camp. Boot camp?

Twelve weeks, mandatory for every man, woman and child, KP, calisthenics, 25-mile hikes. We’ll turn these puke civilians into citizens this country can be proud of.

Do you think people would go along with that, general?
Stupid question, son. Drop down and give me 25 pushups. Whew! Next question . . . whew! . . . homeland security . . . whew!

Homeland security! We got people shipping themselves around the country in crates. We got news organizations smuggling radioactive material all over the place undetected. Disney World has tighter security than we do.

How would you rectify that, general?
First, we establish a perimeter, dig some foxholes, string some barbed wire. Then we make everyone ages 18-55 pull guard duty. Finally, we create a national password—blue mambo. You don’t know the password, you don’t get in.

By **JAMES P. PINKERTON**
Special to *Newsday*

Pinkerton is a Newsday columnist.



Security Council opposed him; he couldn’t even get the vote of his “friend,” Russian chief Vladimir Putin. Parenthetically, one must note with wonder that Bush has never figured out that the ex-KGB man has been playing him like a balalaika. It can be said that no president has been so trusting of the Russians since Franklin D. Roosevelt clinked glasses with Josef Stalin during World War II.

And then of course, besotted with speechwriter-generated “moral clarity,” Bush went to war anyway. The plan was to catch or kill Saddam Hussein, expose the weapons of mass destruction and get out clean. By now, the United States was supposed to have maybe 30,000 troops overseeing happy Iraqis electing a pro-American government and paying for their own reconstruction with oil money.

None of those optimistic scenarios has come true. The president’s latest rationale is that the war was fought to secure human rights in Iraq. His hard-core supporters have fallen loyally into line—although curiously, most opposed helping Liberia, and none demand action against mass slaughter in Congo.

And Bush now has enemies on the right, too. Many of the neoconservatives who urged him into Iraq are now urging him to invade Syria and/or Iran—and making no secret of their disappointment in his not heeding them. Neo-hawk Mark Helprin, for example, writing in the *Claremont Review of Books*, dismisses Bush’s entire Middle East policy as “ill-conceived” in its Iraq-only focus.

That’s what happens when a big mission fails. The opponents get close for the haymaker, and Machiavellian supporters get out of the way. And incidentally, he won’t get much out of the United Nations.

Bush might still hunker down at home, play to his base and win re-election. But his foreign policy “vision” has been shattered. The pieces that once reflected his own vain posturing are strewn across America. They are drenched in blood but, of course, it’s not Bush’s.

By **JIM SHEA**
The *Hartford Courant*

Shea is a columnist for The Hartford Courant.



General, what would you do about the growing divide among the classes?

There are no classes in this man’s America. There are officers, and there are enlisted personnel. And everyone will know who’s who by their uniform.

Uniform?
Khakis and dress whites; Hawaiian shirts if you’re on R&R. If you are elected . . .

If, son? There’s no if in this man’s America. Drop down and give me another 25.

Whew! When you are . . . whew! . . . elected . . . whew! . . . how will you deal with a Republican controlled Congress?

Good, question, son, good question.

Thank God.

I’ll tell you how I’ll deal with Congress. First, I’ll give them a chance to surrender.

Surrender? And if they don’t?

Then we attack, launch Operation Gasbag.

You’d attack Congress?

Darn straight, although I’d get the United Nations behind me first.

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LIBERTY DONES

HONORING GUERRERO

The members of the 14th CNMI Senate, headed by Senate President Joaquin Adriano, third left, present a plaque and a set of the chamber's gavel to the family of former governor and senator Larry Guerrero. Guerrero was honored for his remarkable work in government and for the historic role he played in the CNMI, being the first Senate president in 1978. Guerrero, who could not come for the ceremony for health reasons, was represented by his wife Mathilde, eldest son Jack, daughter Francis Naraja, and granddaughters Nikita and Mathilde. Also in photo is Gov. Juan N. Babauta, second right.

TABLES

From Page 1

M. Ogo

- Education – Justo S. Quitugua
- Judicial and Government Operations – Jesus P. Lizama
- U.S. and Foreign Relations – Claudio K. Norita
- Commerce and Tourism – Ray N. Yumul
- Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications – House Vice Speaker Timothy P. Villagomez

The new House leadership is mostly comprised of Covenant Party members (nine), except for Quitugua, who is a Democrat. The minority bloc is composed of mostly Republican Party members (seven), except for Rep. David M. Apatang, who ran as an independent in the Nov. 2003 polls.

It was Maratita who nominated Villagomez to the House vice speakership. Despite their smaller number, the minority lawmakers still tried to put up a fight by nominating Rep. David Apatang, who was nominated by Seman. The vote came up 10-8 in favor of Villagomez.

The same picture played out during the election for the floor leader, with Lizama nominating Babauta and Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb nominating

former House floor leader Jesus T. Attao. Not surprisingly, the votes came up 10-8, in favor of Babauta.

In a light moment that had everyone in stitches, Tebuteb, who had nominated Attao, voted for Babauta during the roll call for the floor leader nomination—apparently by mistake. He compounded this by saying: “Of course I’m voting for Babauta since I nominated him.” His party-mates could hardly believe their ears and were all looking at him disbelievingly. It was only when someone pointed out his mistake that he recalled his vote and changed it to Attao.

Setting the House’s new direction, Fitial reiterated his vow to put aside politics and work with the 14th Senate and the Babauta administration to revive the CNMI economy. Other lawmakers echoed the same sentiment, highlighting the need for cooperation if the 14th House is to succeed.

The 14th Legislature would stay in office for two years, or until 2005.

Before proceeding with their respective speeches, Fitial called for a brief recess to notify Gov. Babauta and the 14th Senate that the House has been duly organized and ready to conduct business. He appointed Palacios and Yumul to make the notification to Gov. Juan N. Babauta, while Norita and Ogo

were tasked with the Senate.

The 13th House’ Speaker, Heinz S. Hofschneider, who was acting as Speaker pro temp during the inaugural session, gave a short speech in the vernacular before stepping down to give way to Fitial.

The inaugural session started on time at 10am with the entry into the chamber of the new lawmakers and various dignitaries that included Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio, Superior Court Associate Judge Juan Lizama, and Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela. Lizama administered the oath of office of the new legislators.

The legislative halls and House chamber were jam-packed with families, relatives, friends and supporters of the new lawmakers, as well as government officials and members of Gov. Babauta’s Cabinet.

Before adjourning the session, Floor Leader Babauta commended the Legislative Bureau staff and volunteers for the preparations that went into yesterday’s inaugural session.

The public later joined the lawmakers and their families for lunch at the legislature building’s parking lot, where a tent had been set up. The food was catered by the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

FITIAL

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after last Saturday’s Red Mass and have agreed to work together in reviving the Commonwealth economy.

“I am pleased to inform all of you that we have agreed in principle to put politics aside and work together to help revive the CNMI economy so we can help create wealth and jobs for the people of the Commonwealth,” he said.

Fitial said that House leaders, together with the Senate leadership, would also create a joint legislative committee that would meet regularly to tackle important pieces of legislation.

“The joint legislative leadership will be revived to allow the Senate leadership and the House leadership to meet regularly. I thank the governor for agreeing to host the joint legislative committee meetings at the governor’s conference room and I believe that we agreed to hold these meetings every Fridays,” he added.

Gov. Babauta himself expressed a wish for a closer working relationship between his administration and the Legislature, saying he welcomes Fitial’s overture and that he looks forward to working with the House.

“I welcome that and I appreciate that and I look forward to working with the new Speaker and all the members [of the 14th House],” said Gov. Babauta.

Fitial stressed that the Commonwealth is faced with serious problems that could destroy the livelihood of the people of the CNMI, especially the poor ones, if immediate action is not taken to halt this slide.

Toward this end, he said the partition that divides the House and the Senate, which was opened two years ago but was abruptly shut, will be reopened to allow free access between the two chambers, in the hope of closer cooperation between these two Houses.

As speaker of the 14th House, Fitial promised Gov. Babauta that the lower chamber will work with his administration to help with important legislation to revive the economy and beautify the CNMI to attract more businesses and visitors to the Commonwealth.

The new House speaker also pledged to work with all members of the House, the Senate, and the administration “to make our beautiful home a better place to live.”

The same sentiment was echoed by other House members during their respective speeches, in addition to expressions of gratitude to their families and supporters. Lawmakers from the 13th House who made it into the 14th cited the accomplishments of the previous House and the need to continue with the momentum of passing legislation that would help revive the ailing economy.

TINIAN

From Page 1

Rota senator Paterno S. Hocog chairs the Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law and the Committee on Executive Appointment and Government Investigations.

Tinian newcomer senator Henry H. San Nicholas heads the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare, as well as the Committee on Federal Relations and Independent Agencies.

Rota senator Diego M. Songao heads the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications.

Saipan senator Pete P. Reyes, who briefly took the Senate presidency last year amid a fierce legal battle with Manglona’s bloc, is back to being a regular member.

His fellow Saipan senator, Thomas Villagomez, who used to head the Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law, is also a minority member.

Adriano said he is prepared to take on the challenges as president, bearing in mind the need for greater cooperation among members.

At present, he said the Senate would prioritize measures that would promote economic development, even as he expressed his support for the immediate passage of the Babauta administration’s proposed Fiscal Management Plan.

“We just have to revive the CNMI economy. We need to introduce economic reforms. This is the highest priority now. Right now, we’re focusing on ways how to adopt that [fiscal management plan],” said Adriano.

Meantime, Manglona, who had consistently occupied the presidency in the last six years, said seeing another person on the top seat “does not really matter as long as you can work together.”

Manglona expressed confidence that Adriano is fully ripe for the

position. “He is the most senior member [from Tinian].”

It is also the first for the Tinian delegation to get the Senate presidency.

In related developments, Manglona said that he had pushed for the creation of the Committee on Youth “because this is an area that we need to put our attention on.” He said the creation of the committee aims to address youth-related problems such as teenage pregnancy, drugs, and the like.

As a start, he said he intends to consult with the Public School System, Department of Public Health, and other concerned agencies to assess the current needs of the CNMI youth.

Meanwhile, the Senate adopted yesterday Senate Resolution 14-01 honoring former governor and the CNMI’s first Senate president, Larry Guerrero.

Guerrero, who could not attend the ceremony due to health reasons, was represented by his family led by his wife, Mathilde.

EX-BOS

From Page 1

Bert Douglas Montgomery and Michael T. Wilson. Munson also tasked Aldan to perform 300 hours of community service.

Aldan’s relatives and supporters filled a portion of the courtroom’s gallery during the court proceedings. Accompanied by lawyer Howard Trapp, Aldan went straight to a horde of supporters upon exiting the courtroom after the sentencing, apparently to evade questions from the media.

A federal jury convicted Aldan on June 20, 2003, together with Montgomery who was recently meted out a 20-year imprisonment term for the same charges and additional multiple wire fraud and money laundering counts. The jury also convicted another defendant, DuSean Berkich, on wire fraud and money laundering charges, but he reportedly committed suicide before he could be sentenced.

U.S. prosecutor Patrick Smith had charged Aldan with conspiracy in

connection with his participation in the fraudulent release of some \$5 million in BoS loans to Texas firm Sweven Systems LLC owned by Wilson. The wire fraud count against Aldan and Montgomery arose from transactions that defrauded bank customer Hom.

Smith had recommended to the court the 10-year-jail term against Aldan. Munson imposed five years imprisonment on Aldan for each of the charges he was convicted of—the same prison term Munson had imposed on Montgomery for the same counts. Unlike Aldan’s sentence, however, Montgomery’s sentence would run concurrently, amid equal and higher prison terms imposed on him for six other criminal counts.

The court earlier sentenced Wilson, who had pleaded guilty to four criminal counts including conspiracy to commit wire fraud, to three years imprisonment for each count. The court ruled, however, that Wilson would serve his sentence concurrently. It was Wilson who testified as prosecution witness in a trial that lasted about six weeks, including the jury selection process.

CUC justifies desalination project to OPA

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board chairman Herman P. Sablan has maintained that the CUC violated no procurement laws in its desalination project, noting that no other agency but the CUC has done a comprehensive evaluation of all project proposals, leading to its ranking of Taekwang Heavy Industries as “the most responsive.”

In a Jan. 6 response letter to Public Auditor Michael Sablan, the CUC board chair said that Taekwang “did put forth the most responsive and responsible proposal” as assessed by “very competent” CUC personnel.

“All the proposals submitted were reviewed by very competent CUC personnel who were capable with the task at hand. It’s done objectively and in light of the mandate of CUC’s own procurement rules and procedures,” Sablan said.

“To conclude that the RFP process is somehow invalid and biased simply because of the MOU (memorandum of understanding signed with Taekwang prior to RFP) without having conducted a comprehensive review of all proposals submitted is in and of itself unfair and unwarranted. Such conclusion can only come from someone who has not taken time to conduct a comprehensive review of all the proposals submitted which, in this case, has been done only by CUC,” he added.

The Office of the Public Auditor, in a Dec. 19, 2003 preliminary report, recommended the cancellation of the project, saying there was “sufficient evidence to conclude that CUC’s actions were flawed and tainted to a significant degree.”

The OPA advised that the CUC stop from further negotiations on the project, and to rescind any and all agreements it signed with any project bidders, such as the July 9, 2003 MOU with Taekwang.

It noted that the CUC chairman signed an MOU with Taekwang, the company that was eventually determined to be the most responsive, on July 9, 2003, or almost two months before the RFP was issued.

The House committee on public utilities, transportation, and communication had also advised the utility firm to immediately cancel the project, saying its procurement procedure is “critically flawed.”

PUTC chairman Joseph Deleon Guerrero, in a Jan. 7, 2004 letter to CUC, said that “based upon the analysis...it is the determination of the committee that the procurement of 3 MGD desalination plant ...is critically flawed, through what appears to be gross mismanagement, abuse of power, and clear violations of applicable laws, procurement rules and regulations.”

In particular, the lawmaker asked the CUC to terminate all its negotiations with Taekwang to

save the CUC board from committing further violation of fiduciary duty and responsibilities. The CUC board earlier intended to award a \$136-million contract to Taekwang. The contract would require the CUC to buy 3 million gallons of water everyday at \$7.9 per 1,000 gallons or \$25,000 a day.

BOG
cmyk

MVA to participate in Spring WEDDEX

“The idea is to aggressively advertise the CNMI as the best choice for couples who want to get married overseas,” said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Jonas Ogren of a plan to participate in an event in South Korea.

The Marianas Visitors Authority will step up its promotions, particularly in the South Korean market, by participating in the Spring WEDDEX 2004 slated for January 28 to February 2, 2004 in Seoul, Korea.

WEDDEX is held biannually, with one exhibition in the spring and another one in the fall. Close to 100,000 visitors are expected to attend the Spring Weddex show, making it one of the best attended events in South Korea.

For the year 2003, more than 25,000 visitors arrived on the islands from South Korea—the CNMI’s second largest travel market.

Tourist surveys indicates that approximately 15 percent or 4,000 of these visitors’ purpose of travel was to either get married or spend their honeymoon in the CNMI.

“We would like to see the numbers go up for this particular market. It is possible to do this by bringing our product to the Weddex show and sharing the information with the travel



Reigning Miss CNMI-Universe Kimberly Reyes struts the runway during the 2003 Fall Weddex in South Korea.

agents, media, and consumers who attend Weddex,” Ogren said.

The Spring Weddex show is directed at couples and honeymooners who are actively searching for destinations that cater to their special needs.

The MVA intends to highlight the Northern Marianas as a potential destination for the bridal

and honeymoon market segments by exhibiting the amenities that are targeted to this vital travel market from South Korea.

In addition to the standard destination information, the MVA will also provide specifics such as photography services, bridal gowns, floral shops, transportation companies and optional tours.

The participating MVA members include the Aqua Resort Club Saipan, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Hafadai Beach Hotel, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Koreana Tours Bureau, Costa World Tours, Grand Hotel, Budget Rent-A-Car, Rota Resort & Country Club, SandCastle, and Mandara Spa.

PNG travel ban lifted for Chinese investors

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—The recent ban on Chinese citizens traveling to Papua New Guinea was lifted on Friday to allow a Chinese foreign ministerial delegation to get into the country over the weekend.

The team of six, led by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong, arrived Saturday afternoon for an annual senior officials consultation with Papua New Guinea’s foreign affairs officials.

The meeting will also set the agenda for Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare’s visit to China next month.

Last week, immigration officers put a blanket ban on all Chinese traveling into the

country after failing to deport five Chinese illegals. Senior officers from the Foreign Affairs Department said they were directed to lift the ban, but were not happy with media reports that the ban issued last week had affected the travel of a high-powered delegation from China.

They said the team from the China National Petroleum Company led by Xuda Xu were expected to travel in November as advised in a letter. The letter from the Mining and Petroleum Department was written to the immigration office on November 18 asking them to quickly process travel documents for Xu’s team. The officers said they processed the papers the next day but the group had not traveled.

Some phone service in American Samoa

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (Samoa News/PIR)—Blue Sky mobile telephone service has been restored for most residents of Tutuila, American Samoa.

The private mobile phone company’s network was shut down last week as Tropical Cyclone Heta’s mighty winds started to blow across the island.

Service was restored in Tutuila on Wednesday.

Full service was also restored to the Pago Pago bay area on Wednesday, from Onesosopo to the Rainmaker Hotel.

Wednesday evening, service was restored to Utulei, Fagaalu, and the coastal road from town to the western side, and Lau’i.

Long distance service remains available to anyone with Blue Sky service, or to those using “white cards” and an ASTCA phone.

Company spokesperson Lewis Wolman said Blue Sky crews will now push further east and west, but was unable to predict exactly when full service will be restored in those areas.

Wolman praised American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA) crews for their efficient restoration of power to cell sites, and thanked the American Samoa TeleCommunications Authority (ASTCA) for their assistance in re-establishing the “interconnection” circuit that allows Blue Sky customers to call ASTCA customers, and vice versa.

Asbestos snags Niue recovery

SYDNEY, Australia (ABC News Online/PIR)—Residents on the cyclone-shattered Pacific island of Niue are now having to deal with asbestos problems.

Special equipment will be sent in this week to help with the clean-up.

Cyclone Heta destroyed many houses and also ripped open asbestos roofing that was common in many buildings.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff says the asbestos is a health risk and the clean-up of affected areas has been suspended until safety equipment arrives.

A Hercules will carry

respirators, overalls and sealable bags to Niue on Tuesday, with health and safety officers then training a team of locals to safely remove the asbestos.

Meanwhile, Australian defense personnel have delivered nearly 11,500 kilograms of emergency relief to Niue.

Local residents of the island helped the deployment of 21 Army and Air Force members unload much needed medical and emergency supplies.

The Australian Department of Defense hopes its latest humanitarian aid effort will provide important resources to help rebuild the country.

Fiji fishing giant defies govt order

SUVA, Fiji (Radio Fiji/PIR)—Fiji Fish Limited is continuing to fish in the archipelago waters despite a government decision restricting non indigenous long line tuna boats from fishing in these areas.

Fiji Fish boss Grahame Southwick says, he is unhappy the Government’s decision.

Only indigenous individuals, companies and foreign companies

with indigenous shareholders and have boats under 20 meters long, are permitted by the Government to fish in the archipelago waters.

Southwick says, he has 15 meter fishing boats that fish in the archipelago waters and the government cannot force these boats to fish in the high seas.

Archipelago waters are the sea zones close to the reefs where the customary fishing grounds begin.

mayors office

Business

Inbox trauma: New anti-spam tools falter

By **ANICK JESDANUN**
AP INTERNET WRITER

Software makers have spent millions of dollars developing new tools for battling spam, and a new federal anti-spam law went into effect on Jan. 1. So are our e-

mail inboxes any less cluttered?

In the week since the law took effect, spam-filtering company Brightmail Inc. flagged 58 percent of incoming e-mail as spam, showing no change from December. And America Online Inc. saw a 10 percent jump in

spam from overseas, possibly from spammers trying to evade U.S. law.

Some experts even believe the new law will actually bury us in even more electronic junk.

"Now we have a green light for what would come to be called

'legal spam,'" said Vincent Schiavone, chief executive of the ePrivacy Group consultancy. By establishing official guidelines for what's permissible, "the federal law made unsolicited mail legal but no less unwanted."

Advances in filtering technology aren't eliminating spam, either, as spammers quickly develop smarter countermeasures such as constantly changing the wording in their messages.

As well, spammers have used computer viruses to create additional e-mail relay points even as Internet service companies shut down previously poisoned pathways.

Leslie Flynn, an administrative assistant for an investment banker, continues to get ads for Xanax, Valium and "things to make parts of your bodies bigger."

The new law doesn't actually ban pitches as long as senders meet various guidelines—such as including an accurate subject line and the sender's real-world mail address. Recipients must also be offered a way to decline, or opt out of, future e-mailings.

The law's backers figure spammers aren't inclined to be

so cooperative or forthright, but neither will they want to face up to five years imprisonment.

"A spammer will see that and say, 'Yikes, I'm going to move to another line of business,'" said Trevor Hughes of the Email Service Provider Coalition, whose members send newsletters and other bulk mailings they deem legitimate.

But notably, many marketers support the law, particularly its nullification of some conflicting state statutes and, in California's case, tougher measures that would have required a recipient's permission before sending commercial e-mail.

"Everyone was planning for this California law, which was so draconian," said Ira Rothken, a San Rafael, Calif., lawyer who has defended companies accused of spamming. "Once the federal government passed the federal law, everyone was kind of relieved."

He said many marketers who had, because of the California law, planned on scaling back on e-mailings sent on their behalf by freelancers were no longer curtailing the mailing.

"Basically it's a bill of rights for companies that want to send

junk e-mail," said John Levine, a board member of the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail.

Several marketers insist they'll adhere to stronger guidelines and only ship missives to people who have requested mailings.

"From a marketer's perspective, you have to think of the long term," said Michael Sippey of Quris Inc., which handles e-mail for Charles Schwab Corp., Blockbuster Inc. and others. He said marketers won't want to forever lose potential customers who get annoyed and opt out.

Nonetheless, Sippey agreed that the law won't stop spammers from simply moving offshore or further trying to hide their tracks - even if doing so is now illegal.

Some critics of the law point to technology as the solution, though techniques developed so far have failed.

Researchers at Microsoft Corp. and elsewhere are studying whether to require small payments to send e-mail, costs that would be prohibitive for spammers who send millions



BOW FOR SUCCESS

Leaders of Japan's three major business lobbies, bowing at left, greet guests at the entrance of their annual new year party for nation's business leaders at a Tokyo hotel Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2004. Japanese business leaders celebrated the New Year by expressing optimism about economic recovery while cautioning on the brewing risks that could hamper growth such as currency fluctuations and the war in Iraq.

Born lucky, live longer

By **RICHARD MORIN**
THE WASHINGTON POST



People who happen to be born in good economic times live longer than those who aren't and the apparent payoff from an economically fortuitous birthday lasts a lifetime, according to a team of European researchers.

"The results indicate a strong effect of ... economic conditions during childhood on mortality at all ages," reported a team of researchers, headed by economics professor Maarten Lindeboom of the Free University of Amsterdam, in a paper published recently by the

Institute for the Study of Labor at the University of Bonn. "Those who are born in bad times on average have a high mortality rate throughout life, in particular during childhood itself and at ages above 50. Current macroeconomic conditions mostly have an effect on youths and on the elderly."

The data come from a unique source: a random sample of 3,000 individuals born in the province of Utrecht in the Netherlands between 1812 and 1912. Researchers collected information on these individuals from birth until their deaths, allowing a clear view of how economic conditions affected mortality.

On average, they found that a 10 percent improvement in gross national product added

nearly three years to the life of the average respondent. Moreover, most of the benefits due to economic conditions accrued from conditions during the first years of life, making it "particularly useful (from a policy standpoint) to focus on children aged between 1 and 7 in bad economic conditions," Lindeboom's team reported.

These researchers can say with reasonable confidence what is likely to happen when people are born during economic booms and busts. But they don't know why it happens. Perhaps people have more money to spend on health care for their infants during good times and the effects of these expenditures influence health over a lifetime, they suggest.

Gas prices climb 7 cents a gallon

After four weeks of stability or decline, retail gasoline prices surged more than seven cents per gallon in the past three weeks, an industry analyst said Sunday.

The price for all three grades combined was \$1.58 on Friday, up 7.1 cents since Dec. 19, according to the Lundberg Survey of 8,000 stations nationwide.

Several factors were responsible, including rising crude oil prices, a weaker U.S. dollar, colder

weather that drove up demand for home heating oil and two U.S. gasoline reformulations, said analyst Trilby Lundberg.

In the same period, retail diesel prices increased 3.3 cents per gallon, to \$1.63. It was the first significant increase since early October and reflected recent demand for heating oil, Lundberg said.

Further price increases were likely, but it was impossible to

predict how much they would rise, Lundberg said.

The all-grades retail average price of gasoline was 8 cents higher than it was this time last year, and 2.5 cents below the average price for 2003.

The national weighted average price of gasoline, including taxes, at self-serve pumps Friday was about \$1.55 for regular, \$1.65 for midgrade, and \$1.74 for premium. (AP)

nmirf

Companies opting for pay cards as cheaper, paperless process

By CAROLINE E. MAYER
THE WASHINGTON POST

Payday used to be a logistical challenge for Anthony Barnes. With no bank account, the U-Haul employee couldn't have his pay electronically deposited overnight. So he'd wait four extra days to get a paycheck, then pay high fees to cash it at a store. Sometimes he avoided fees by depositing his check in his mother's bank account. But then he'd have to wait another week for the check to clear to get the cash.

Now Barnes uses an increasingly popular innovation: the payroll card. U-Haul electronically credits his pay to a special debit account, and Barnes then uses a plastic card to gain immediate access to his funds—either withdrawing cash at automated teller machines or paying for goods at store checkouts, swiping his card like any other debit or credit card.

"I use it every way I can. I love it," said Barnes, 20, general manager of U-Haul Storage Intown in Washington.

Introduced in the late 1990s, payroll cards have taken off in the past two years, especially as the two major credit card companies, Visa and MasterCard, started offering their own branded versions, enabling workers to cash their pay wherever major credit and debit cards are accepted.

Payroll cards are just one of the many ways employers are trying to turn the entire pay system into a paperless process.



THE WASHINGTON POST

"I use it every way I can. I love it," Anthony Barnes, manager of a U-Haul in Washington, says of his payroll card. Payroll cards have taken off in the past two years, just one of the many ways employers are trying to turn the entire pay system into a paperless process.

And most of the growth has been prompted by companies eager to trim payroll costs, not by workers' demand.

But as use of the cards grows, so do concerns about the lack of consumer protections that go with them, because the cards are unregulated.

"Payroll cards offer all the problems of a bank account without the benefits—all the fees and costs without the opportunity to save and build wealth," said Ed Mierzwinski, consumer program director for

the consumer advocacy group U.S. PIRG.

About 2.2 million payroll cards are in use, double the number in circulation a year ago, said Aaron McPherson, research manager at Financial Insights, a Massachusetts market research firm. By next year, 3.5 million cards will be in use, he said, predicting that number will double by 2006. The list of companies offering payroll cards includes such well-known corporate names as United Parcel Service Inc.; Blockbuster

Inc.; Sears, Roebuck and Co.; Coca-Cola Co.; McDonald's Corp.; and Domino's Inc.

The card is primarily designed for what the financial services industry calls the "unbanked"—those nearly 14 million households that don't have bank accounts. As such consumers have become increasingly accustomed to using plastic gift cards, the acceptance of plastic payroll cards has become more widespread, industry officials say.

For companies, the cost

savings make the cards attractive. The cost of writing a check ranges from \$1 to \$2, while the cost of making an electronic payment—either to a bank account through direct deposit or to a payroll card—runs about 20 cents.

Some financial institutions that issue pay cards to companies charge employees a monthly maintenance fee, ranging from \$1.50 to \$4, although the fee is often waived for the first year. Many firms set up the cards to also allow employees one free ATM transaction per pay period, with regular ATM fees charged for each additional withdrawal. Some employees also incur a small fee, 25 to 50 cents, every time they use the card at a store checkout.

Sometimes the fees can total more than it would cost to have a bank account, or even cash a check at a store—a concern of consumer advocates and state regulators.

To some companies, the payroll card is the first step to eliminating paper pay stubs.

Although most payroll cards do not let employees get in debt by withdrawing more than is on their account, some consumer advocates worry that employees will treat their card like a credit card, building little in savings. But Visa said that is not what it has found. "We're seeing cardholders leave balances on their cards," said Nizam Antoo, Visa USA's product director.

U-Haul's Barnes agrees. "I would spend more if I had cash in my pocket. It's easier to save with my card."



Drug manager sued over rebates, prices

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Two New York labor groups are suing Express Scripts Inc., accusing the nation's third-largest manager of prescription drug plans of allegedly pocketing rebates and inflating drug prices, driving up health care costs in the state.

The lawsuit was filed Dec. 31 in state Supreme Court in New York City and announced Sunday by the Organization of New York State Management Confidential Employees and United University Professions, which represent more than 30,000 state workers.

Pharmacy benefit managers are essentially the middlemen that negotiate on behalf of their clients for discounts from drug manufacturers. The suit accuses St. Louis-based Express Scripts of deceptive practices, such as keeping rebates paid by drug makers instead of passing those savings along to health plans.

Express Scripts also received kickbacks from drug manufacturers to recommend higher-priced drugs rather than more affordable alternatives, the suit said.

The lawsuit seeks undisclosed monetary and punitive damages. Express Scripts provides pharmacy benefit management for 1.1 million current and retired state workers under a contract that expires at the end of 2005.

Ex-Enron CFO's wife still in plea talks

HOUSTON (AP)—Lawyers for the wife of former Enron Corp. finance chief Andrew Fastow kept working Sunday on a plea deal that would clear the path for a separate agreement for him, possibly leading to more prosecutions of top executives of the collapsed energy giant.

"They are ongoing," Mike DeGeurin, Lea Fastow's lead lawyer, said Sunday about plea negotiations. He declined to elaborate.

Leslie Caldwell, head of the

Justice Department's Enron Task Force, and Justice Department spokesman Bryan Sierra didn't return calls for comment Sunday.

Andrew Fastow is charged with 98 counts of fraud, money laundering, conspiracy, insider trading and others for allegedly running a web of partnerships and schemes designed to enrich himself as well as inflate Enron's profits and hide company debt. His wife is charged with six counts of conspiracy and filing false tax forms for allegedly taking part in laundering money skimmed from the deals and failing to report the income to the government.

A proposed package plea deal for the Fastows hit a roadblock last week when the judge presiding over her case balked at being required up front to impose a five-month sentence. Instead, U.S. District Judge David Hittner said he would accept a plea, but a plea agreement would have to give him discretion to impose whatever sentence he deemed appropriate after federal probation authorities conduct a pre-sentencing investigation.

Pilots pleased with new contract

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—After nearly three years of talks with Mesaba Airlines, pilots said Sunday that their new tentative contract agreement brings their pay and benefits in line with their peers at other regional carriers.

The deal reached in the wee hours Sunday averted a strike that could have threatened the survival of one of the nation's largest regional carriers and hurt Northwest Airlines, the nation's fourth-largest carrier.

Mesaba resumed nearly full operations on Sunday after canceling all flights Saturday. The proposed contract will be presented over the next week to pilots, who are expected to vote on ratification this month.

The agreement came after talks had stretched more than a day past a strike deadline.

While spokesman Dave Ricci of the Air Line Pilots Association would not provide exact details of the contract until it had been presented to Mesaba's 844 pilots, he said the pact "puts all of our big issues in the same range with

what we consider our peer groups," including pilots at Comair and Air Wisconsin.

Grocery union: LA talks unsuccessful

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Four days of secret, informal negotiations between Southern California grocery workers who have been on strike for three months and their employers ended Sunday without success, a union spokeswoman said.

Representatives from seven local unions and from the grocery chains Ralphs, Vons and Albertsons met at a secret location without a federal mediator in hopes of producing a settlement, said Ellen Anreder, a spokeswoman for the United Food and Commercial Workers.

The talks were intensive and "completely off the record" until they broke down Sunday, she said.

About 70,000 grocery clerks from Kroger Co.'s Ralphs, Safeway Inc.'s Vons and Albertsons Inc. walked out Oct. 11 over contract differences, particularly the cost and scope of health care benefits for current employees and future hires.

Nation

Asia

N. Korea urges US on nuke halt offer

By **HANS GREIMEL**
AP WRITER

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A day after showing American delegates its “nuclear deterrent,” North Korea marked the anniversary Sunday of its expulsion of U.N. weapons inspectors by resolving to bolster its self-defense against a possible U.S. nuclear attack.

Yet as the isolated communist North kept up its typically harsh anti-American rhetoric, North Korea’s official KCNA news agency also urged Washington to accept Pyongyang’s offer of a freeze on its program as a first step toward resolving the crisis over its atomic weapons programs.

The American delegates arrived in Seoul on Sunday after a visit to the North in which officials reportedly showed them recently reprocessed plutonium—the fuel for atomic bombs—to convey the extent of development and what might be curbed if the programs were suspended. The five delegates were the first outside visitors to the Yongbyon nuclear plant since Pyongyang expelled the U.N. inspectors.

International and domestic pressure is mounting for the Bush administration to accept the North’s offer of a freeze as a compromise to rekindle six-nation talks on the nuclear standoff.

While previously rejecting such offers, the United States—against the backdrop of the delegation’s visit—



Jack Pritchard, second left, a former U.S. State Department official, and John W. Lewis, center, professor emeritus of international relations at Stanford University, arrive at Sun An Airport in Pyongyang, capital of North Korea, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2004.

called Pyongyang’s latest proposal a “positive step forward.” South Korea hailed the plan as creating “atmosphere” for new negotiations.

Meanwhile, Russia and China were working to broker a compromise that reportedly calls for a freeze as a first step toward resuming six-nation talks on the Korea crisis. Chinese diplomats are expected to float such a proposal next week in Washington, according to Russia’s Itar-Tass news agency.

The American delegation has said it was shown everything it asked to see at North Korea’s Yongbyon nuclear facility, but delegates would not give details until they had briefed superiors in Washington.

One delegate, Jack Pritchard, has urged Washington to “pocket” Pyongyang’s offer of a freeze before North Korea is able to strengthen its nuclear arsenal and its negotiating hand. North Korea is believed to already have

one or two nuclear weapons, and could soon build several more with reprocessed plutonium.

“It is urgently important that the United States stop the program now before Pyongyang becomes a limited nuclear weapons state,” the former U.S. State Department official wrote in an editorial published Friday in the Korea Herald. The piece was written before he left for North Korea.

The nuclear dispute flared in

October 2002 when Washington accused North Korea of running a secret nuclear program in violation of a 1994 agreement. A U.S.-led international coalition cut off free oil shipments being supplied under the accord, and - on Jan. 11, 2003 - North Korea expelled U.N. inspectors from Yongbyon.

In marking the anniversary of the move, North Korea’s official KCNA news agency said Sunday the country has resolved to “keep strengthening self-defensive means to check the nuclear pre-emptive attack of the U.S.”

The North has insisted it needs nuclear weapons as a deterrent against a possible U.S. attack. It says it will freeze its nuclear programs as a first step if Washington lifts sanctions against it, resumes shipments of heavy oil, and removes North Korea from the State Department list of countries that sponsor terrorism.

In response, the United States has demanded that North Korea first verifiably begin dismantling its nuclear programs before receiving any concessions.

Two U.S. congressional aides from the delegation were scheduled to meet South Korean Foreign Ministry officials on Monday. Republican aide Keith Luse and Democratic colleague Frank Jannuzzi are East Asia experts for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. They work respectively for Republican committee chairman Richard Lugar and Joseph Biden, the panel’s ranking Democrat.

Crews seek clues after Indonesian blast

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Forensic crews picked through debris Sunday after the bombing of a karaoke bar on Indonesia’s Sulawesi island that killed four people and wounded three.

The blast—the latest explosion to hit the world’s most populous Muslim nation—occurred Saturday night in the town of Palopo in South Sulawesi province, deputy local police chief Maj. Wisnu Widarto said.

Parts of Sulawesi island were wracked by violence between Muslims and Christians in 1999 and 2000, but Widarto said “it was too soon” to link the blast to religious militants.

No one claimed responsibility.

Four people—including a waitress in the busy café—were killed instantly. All the victims were Muslims, Widarto said.

“At the moment we do not yet know the motive and are having trouble identifying possible suspects,” he told The Associated Press.

The blast was caused by a low-explosive bomb planted on the second floor of the cafe, about 1,100 miles northeast of Jakarta, officers said.

Forensic experts were searching for clues at the scene of the bombing. Officers also were questioning 15 witnesses, Widarto said.

Fighting between Muslims and Christians in 1999 and 2000 left more than 1,000 dead in Central Sulawesi province. The violence did not spread to South Sulawesi, however.

On Oct. 12, 2002, suspected militants belonging to the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah militant group blew up two nightclubs on Bali island, killing 202

people, mostly foreign tourists.

Several of the 29 people so far convicted in the Bali blasts cited revenge for the deaths of Muslims on Sulawesi, and the nearby Maluku islands, as a motive for the attacks.

Jemaah Islamiyah also has been linked to a December 2002 blast at a McDonald’s restaurant in the Sulawesi town of Makassar, which killed three, and to the Aug. 5 attack on the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta that killed 12 people and wounded 150.

Unlike most of Indonesia—a giant archipelago home to hundreds of ethnic groups and several separatist movements—Sulawesi is home to roughly equal numbers of Muslims and Christians.

Some blasts at Indonesian nightspots also have been blamed on disputes between gangsters.

India may hold elections in March

HYDERABAD, India (AP)—India’s ruling party is expected to ask Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to dissolve Parliament and call for national elections as soon as March, a party spokesman said Sunday.

Vajpayee, who is enjoying a surge in popularity, already was in campaign mode Sunday, attacking main political rival Sonia Gandhi of the Congress Party before thousands of supporters in the southern city of Hyderabad.

Vajpayee’s Bharatiya Janata Party started its national executive committee meeting Sunday in Hyderabad. The Hindu nationalist party wants to call elections soon to capitalize on India’s healthy economy and better ties with Pakistan.

India holds national elections at

least every five years. The current parliament’s term expires in October.

“Elections are around the corner,” BJP spokesman Pramod Mahajan said, adding that the committee would announce the exact date Wednesday.

He said previously that the elections could happen as soon as March.

Political analysts, however, said elections likely will not occur until April because of the amount of time involved in dissolving Parliament and organizing the polls.

“Clearly, the BJP doesn’t want to give much time to the opposition parties to regroup,” said Mahesh Rangarajan, a political analyst and a visiting professor at Cornell University. “But I think ... the earliest dates could be late April.”

Pakistan arrests 9 in plot to assassinate president

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Police arrested nine people believed linked to the planners of last month’s assassination attempt against President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, a security official said Sunday.

The suspects, including some students, were detained during a raid Saturday on an Islamic school in the eastern city of Lahore, the official said on condition of anonymity. He refused to give any more details.

Meanwhile, Pakistan toughened its punishments for terror financiers, raising the maximum jail term from five

to 10 years, and banning them from posting bail, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said.

The Cabinet approved the changes to Pakistan’s 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act on Saturday. Ahmed said terror financiers previously faced a minimum of six months in jail but would now face a minimum of four years.

The changes after two bombings within 11 days targeted Musharraf last month. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks and the president escaped unhurt.

In the second attack, suicide bombers tried to ram two explosive-

laden pickup trucks into Musharraf’s motorcade Dec. 25, killing 16 people. Intelligence officials say the bombers belonged to Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Pakistan-based outlawed militant group fighting Indian rule in the divided Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Musharraf, who made Pakistan a key ally of the United States in its war on terror, banned Jaish-e-Mohammed in January 2002 but has had limited success in stopping its activities.

Jaish-e-Mohammed is one of several Pakistan-based groups opposed to Musharraf’s policy on Kashmir.

Chinese pop diva mourned in HK

HONG KONG (AP)—Thousands lined up outside a Hong Kong funeral parlor on Sunday to pay final respects to Chinese pop diva Anita Mui, who died last month at the age of 40.

Mourners filled two nearby basketball courts across the street from the Hong Kong Funeral Home where the entrance was inundated with white wreaths. Some fans wore black sweat shirts reading “we’ll miss you forever.”

The territory’s top stars also filed in to pay tribute, including singers Sammi Cheng and Gigi Leung, along with former Chinese student leader Wu’er Kaixi, who lives in exile in Taiwan.

Mui died on Dec. 30 of lung complications caused by cervical cancer. Her funeral service was scheduled for Monday.

Mui shot to fame in the 1980s, winning admirers across the Chinese-speaking world with her deep and melancholic voice. She appeared in many acclaimed films.

Mui also was active in charity work. In 1989, she was part of a fund-raising effort for China’s pro-democracy student movement, which mainland authorities crushed with a violent crackdown in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square.

China isolates 3rd possible SARS case

By STEPHANIE HOO
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—China has isolated a 35-year-old man in a hospital on signs he could be the nation's third SARS case of the season, though the Health Ministry has not formally classified him as a suspected case, state media reported Monday.

Meanwhile, China marched on with its war on animals thought to carry SARS, with scientists studying whether they can feed contraceptive drugs to rats, a newspaper said.

The hospitalized man, in the southern province of Guangdong, has not had contact with any SARS patients or infected wild animals, the China Daily reported.

While he has symptoms of severe acute respiratory syndrome, a flu-like disease, "medical experts have yet to confirm the man as a suspected case," the newspaper said.

Officials in neighboring Hong Kong already reported the new possible case over the weekend, having spoken to their counterparts in Guangdong.

SARS is believed to have first appeared in Guangdong in late 2002 before sickening more than 8,000 people worldwide, killing 774 of them. That outbreak waned in July.

The disease re-emerged this season in a 32-year-old television, whose SARS diagnosis was confirmed earlier this month. He left the hospital last week and was pronounced recovered.

World Health Organization spokesman Roy Wadia, who was in Guangdong on Monday, said China's Health Ministry was to confer with physicians in the province later in the day, both to try to verify whether the new patient might have SARS and to find out more about another patient who has already been deemed a "suspected case"—a 20-year-old

Manila fire leaves 22,000 homeless

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A huge fire raged through a shantytown in the Philippine capital early Monday, destroying thousands of shacks and leaving about 22,000 residents homeless, fire department officials said. No deaths were reported.

The blaze broke out before midnight in the impoverished Tondo neighborhood and raged for more than seven hours. It was believed to have been caused by a tipped-over candle or gas lamp, officials said.

The area is crowded and has very narrow alleys, which made it difficult for firefighters to put out the blaze, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said.

A navy fireboat on a nearby river also took part in the operation.

One firefighter was reported injured, but there were no other reports of casualties.

Soliman said 2,503 homes were burned down, leaving about 4,500 families—or 22,000 people—homeless.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo arrived at the scene early Monday and supervised the opening of a shelter at a local gymnasium to accommodate the homeless and distribute relief goods.

Most of the victims were staying temporarily in nearby vacant lots.



A woman wearing a mask walks in a Hong Kong downtown street Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2004. After more than two weeks of intricate tests, the Chinese government and the World Health Organization announced Monday that a sick man in southern China does have the SARS virus, triggering fears that a second season of the illness might be at hand.

waitress who worked in a restaurant serving wild game.

China suspects animals—particularly the weasel-like civet cat—are responsible for spreading SARS to humans. Guangdong province has forbidden restaurants from serving civets and carried out a mass slaughter of the animals last week.

The provincial capital of Guangzhou is also in the midst of a

massive rat-killing campaign to eliminate another possible SARS source. The Beijing Star Daily reported Monday that the city will put out 100 tons of poisoned grain.

Plus, scientists in the western city of Chengdu are studying ways to keep rats from breeding, the paper said. "Experiments show that rats like the flavor of apples, so we will put that flavor into sterilizing drugs," the paper

quoted researcher Ma Lin as saying.

WHO also was studying the case of the TV producer, China's only officially confirmed SARS case of the season. A WHO environmental team this week-end visited the apartment complex where the patient lives to try to figure out how he caught SARS.

"They went around the building and took samples, which are to be tested today or tomorrow," Wadia said.

RP condemns deadly rebel attacks

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine authorities Sunday condemned as a terrorist act a deadly attack by communist rebels on a power station that supplies the capital Manila—but the government said it was still willing to resume peace talks with the guerrillas.

New People's Army guerrillas, armed with rifles and anti-tank rockets, attacked an army detachment guarding the state-run power plant in Batangas province south of Manila Saturday, the military said. Four soldiers and three insurgents died in the fighting.

Military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said the rebels had been planning to destroy the 600-megawatt power plant. If successful, it would have cut power to a region that included the bustling capital metropolitan Manila. The rebels denied planning to destroy the plant.

"We strongly condemn the attack,"

presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said. "It is clear that this is a terroristic activity."

Asked how the attacks would affect prospective peace talks, Bunye said "the government continues to yearn for peace and we would not close our door on any opportunity to attain peace."

The military, police and government officials have been told to be on alert for more attacks, Bunye said.

The attack in the coastal town of Calaca in Batangas, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Manila, came after Communist Party spokesman Gregorio Rosal said last week that the rebels would intensify attacks ahead of May 10 elections to help bring down President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's government because of her strong ties with the United States.

On Friday, a small group of guerrillas

shot and wounded a bodyguard of Congressman Joey Solis, who visited a village road project in Gubat town in Sorsogon province, about 380 kilometers (235 miles) southeast of Manila, the military said. The rebels seized three pistols and three cell phones from the bodyguard. Solis was not hurt, the military said.

The guerrillas, estimated to number more than 9,000, have been waging a Marxist rebellion in the Philippines for 35 years. Washington placed the rebels on its list of terrorist organizations two years ago and urged nations to deny them refuge and money.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo suspended talks with the guerrillas in 2001 after they assassinated a number of politicians. However, both sides have been meeting informally to try to revive the talks with the help of the Norwegian government.

Battle over accused US military mortician widens in South Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The jurisdiction battle over a U.S. military employee who triggered protests after allegedly dumping toxic chemicals into a South Korean river widened Monday with South Korean prosecutors saying they have banned the American from leaving the country.

A South Korean court had earlier this month sentenced Albert McFarland, a civilian mortician with the U.S. military here, to six months in prison. He was not present at the trial.

But the U.S. military refused to accept the South Korean court ruling, saying the Status of Forces Agreement between Washington and Seoul gives the U.S. side jurisdiction over the McFarland case. SOFA governs the legal status of the 37,000

U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.

"Mr. McFarland was in an official duty status and believed he was complying with proper procedures," the U.S. military said in a statement last week. The U.S. military "maintains it has the primary right to jurisdiction."

The U.S. military has no plans to relinquish him to South Korean authorities.

Seoul claims that SOFA allows South Korea jurisdiction over the case, claiming that the incident took place while McFarland was off duty. Until resolved, prosecutors said they would restrict McFarland's movements.

"We imposed a travel ban on McFarland following the court's sentence in order to execute the sentence," a prosecution official said on

customary condition of anonymity.

McFarland was accused of ordering the dumping of 24 gallons (90 liters) of formaldehyde into the Han River, a main source of drinking water for 12 million people in the nation's capital of Seoul, in 2000.

The case became known to the South Korean public after one of McFarland's Korean subordinates at an American military mortuary reported it to a local environmental group.

The case triggered anti-American protests, with activists demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The U.S. military has insisted that the dumped embalming chemical posed no threat to public health or to the environment since it was treated in a sewage system and diluted with waste water.

China wants US to leave Hong Kong alone

By TED ANTHONY
AP WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—Stung by U.S. calls for more democracy in Hong Kong, China has demanded that the American government "stop interfering" in the territory's internal affairs, the official news agency said Sunday.

Kong Quan, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, was quoted by the Xinhua News Agency as responding to a U.S. State Department spokesman's comment on Hong Kong's political development.

"Hong Kong affairs (are) an internal issue of China, and the Chinese government firmly opposes any foreign government interference in the affairs of Hong Kong in any form," Xinhua said, paraphrasing Kong.

It quoted Kong as saying that "Hong Kong's political structure must develop in a gradual and orderly manner."

Last week, U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher expressed the United States' "strong support for democracy through electoral reform and universal suffrage in Hong Kong," saying that would stimulate the territory's economic development.

"Our belief is in democracy," Boucher said at a briefing in Washington. "The Hong Kong people and the Hong Kong government need to start addressing this issue."

He said the United States wanted to make sure that the people of Hong Kong "get their choice to design their system that's appropriate for them." He added: "We care a lot about the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong."

Pro-democracy protests, some of them quite large, have taken place in Hong Kong since July 1, when 500,000 people marched on the streets against a Beijing-backed national security bill. Activists accuse the territory's Beijing-appointed leader, Tung Chee-hwa, of undermining efforts at self-government.

The refrain is a familiar one for both countries. The U.S. government has long called for more democracy in China, both on the mainland and more recently in Hong Kong. China often insists that such comments are an interference in its domestic policies.

Hong Kong, a former British colony, reverted to Chinese rule in 1997. It is now a special administrative region governed under a doctrine known as "one country, two systems," under which the Chinese government has allowed it to operate semi-independently.

The China-U.S. relationship—politically, at least—has been reasonably stable for more than two years, though the economic relationship between the two has grown tense over a U.S. trade deficit and calls from the Bush administration that Beijing float its currency.

World

Overdrive

joeten motors
cmyk

Life & Style

For some teen girls, sexual preference is a shifting concept

By LAURA SESSIONS STEPP
THE WASHINGTON POST

Move over, Ellen DeGeneres, and make way for the younger girls. Way younger, actually, and way different from what most people think of as lesbians.

You can see this new trend on Friday nights outside Union Station, sweethearts from high schools around the Washington area, some locking lips, others hanging out in their tight blue jeans and puffy winter parkas, talking on their cell phones.

You can see them in the hallways of high schools like South Lakes in Reston, Va., Magruder in Rockville, Md., or Coolidge in Washington. In 2002 at Coolidge, a teacher got so fed up with girls nuzzling each other in class and other public places that he threatened to send any he saw to the principal's office. He admitted to students that he wouldn't report boy-girl kisses, setting off a furor among a student body that, the year before, had chosen a lesbian pair as the school's cutest couple.

These girls pack Ani DiFranco concerts and know tATu lyrics by heart. Their attention is usually directed exclusively at each other but not always: A group of girls at a private school in Northwest Washington charge boys \$10 to watch the girls make out in front of them. At one school dance earlier last year, a chaperon had to break up a group of guys circled around two girls kissing, according to other girls who were there.

Maybe the teen-age exhibitionists were just yanking guys' chains, or hoping to prove how sexy they are, or

copying Britney and Madonna. But it's also possible they were enjoying themselves. There's no way for an outsider to know, for in the protean world of young female sexuality, where all forms of expression are modeled, nothing is certain.

Social scientists say that 5 percent to 7 percent of young people are gay or lesbian, and that teen-agers are starting at younger ages to have same-sex sexual experiences: 13 for boys, 15 for girls.

But those figures don't begin to tell the full story about today's girls because girls, more often than boys, experiment with their sexuality and resist being placed in any particular group.

Chanda Harris, a junior at High Road Upper School in Beltsville, Md., is one of these girls. She's standing outside Union Station on a cold Friday night, waiting for her girlfriend and holding three giant helium balloons in celebration of her friend's birthday.

The girls around her from various high schools—Bladensburg in Maryland, Anacostia, Ballou, Cardozo and Coolidge in Washington—converge to hear what she has to say.

She started going out with girls when she was 14, following a breakup with her boyfriend.

"At first I thought going out with a girl was nasty," she says. "Then I went to a club and did a big flip-flop. I've been off and on with girls and guys since then."

Another girl, a junior at Anacostia High, says her first love was a guy now in the Marines and stationed in North Carolina. She dated Kenny for two years and his picture adorns her bedroom wall.

But now she's dating a female high school basketball player.

"Whoever likes me, I like them," she says matter-of-factly.

A world away, on the campus of Brown University, Chloe Root, a sophomore with a penchant for bright-colored, funky skirts from secondhand stores, also prefers to keep her options open.

She had her first crush on a girl at age 12 but dated guys, including one with whom she thought she was in love, until her senior

year in high school in Ann Arbor, Mich. Then she fell in love with a girl a year behind her in school and has been going out with her ever since.

"If something happened to my relationship with Julie, I could see myself with a boy again," Root says. "There are some days I notice I'm thinking girls are pretty, and other days I'm thinking there are a lot of good-looking guys at this school."



THE WASHINGTON POST

Chanda Harris, a junior at a Beltsville, Md., high school, has a girlfriend and says, "Girls understand how girls think."

Fantasy, familiar faves win choice awards

Pirates, hobbits and a little divine intervention captured top honors Sunday at the 30th Annual People's Choice Awards. "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" won the favorite movie award, while "Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" took the favorite drama category. "Bruce Almighty" was named favorite comedy.

Return winners took most of the top performer categories. Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts won for favorite film actor and actress. Ray Romano and Jennifer Aniston won for favorite male and female TV performers. Tom Hanks was named favorite all-time entertainer.

"CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" was selected favorite TV drama series. "Friends" won for favorite comedy series.

Beyonce Knowles and Faith Hill tied for favorite female musical performer, with Tim McGraw winning the favorite male musical performer spot.

The People's Choice Awards, hosted by Charlie Sheen and Jon Cryer, were presented at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and broadcast live on CBS. The awards covered 18 categories in film, television and drama.

A nationwide poll conducted by the Gallup Organization determined both the open-ended nominees and the winners.

Fans also could vote on the Internet in three categories. They chose "Two and a Half Men," which stars the award show's hosts, as the best new comedy series, "Joan of Arcadia" as best new television drama and Matchbox Twenty as favorite musical group or band. (AP)

Peoples Choice Awards Winners

- **Motion picture:** "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl"
- **Drama motion picture:** "Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers"
- **Comedy motion picture:** "Bruce Almighty"
- **Favorite All-Time Entertainer:** Tom Hanks
- **Motion picture actor:** Mel Gibson
- **Motion picture actress:** Julia Roberts
- **Television dramatic series:** "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation"
- **Television comedy series:** "Friends"
- **Female television performer:** Jennifer Aniston
- **Male television performer:** Ray Romano
- **Reality-based television program:** "Survivor: Pearl Islands"
- **Favorite talk show host:** Oprah Winfrey
- **New television comedy series:** "Two and a Half Men"
- **New television dramatic series:** "Joan of Arcadia"
- **Favorite musical group or band:** Matchbox Twenty
- **Female musical performer:** (tie) Beyonce Knowles and Faith Hill
- **Male musical performer:** Tim McGraw
- **Favorite Music Video:** "I Love This Bar"—Toby Keith



Winfrey

Travelers with Alzheimer's require caregiver's company

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I work for a major airline and saw something today that was very disturbing but more common than you might think. A relative of an 87-year-old lady with Alzheimer's disease put her on a plane with a card pinned to her clothes with her name and information written on it. It was not a nonstop flight, and we were asked to make sure she didn't get off the plane before her final destination. The traveler obviously had no idea where she was going or what to do.



Dear Abby

Abby, as you know, things can happen when people fly. Weather and mechanical problems can leave passengers stranded away from home or their destination. Can you imagine how that would affect an already scared and confused lady?

Airline personnel are not baby sitters. People with this mental capacity should be escorted when traveling. Between elderly travelers and inexperienced travelers, we have a lot to deal with during peak seasons.

CONCERNED AIRLINE EMPLOYEE,
AMARILLO, TEXAS

DEAR CONCERNED: I can see why you're concerned. All it would take for tragedy to strike is a flight attendant who is momentarily distracted and a traveler with diminished capacity who follows people off the plane and blends into the crowd in the terminal.

The Alzheimer's Association urges families to always have a caregiver accompany someone with Alzheimer's while traveling. It also offers helpful travel tips for the caregiver. Read on:

- (1) Get plenty of rest before the trip.
- (2) Dress the patient in clothes that are easy to put on and remove (skirts with elastic bands for women; sweatpants for men).
- (3) Have the patient wear an ID bracelet at all times. Information on it should include: name, address and phone number. In addition, inside the patient's purse or pocket, place a card with the name of the hotel or person you'll be visiting.
- (4) Be sure to carry pertinent medications, medical records and insurance cards with you. (Also the tickets and money.)
- (5) Check all luggage at the curb through to the final destination.
- (6) Realize that change may create confusion and disorientation. Be realistic. Know going in that strange people, accommodations, time changes and busy terminals are all known to precipitate panic in AD patients.
- (7) Keep the patient's diet and dining times simple and consistent.
- (8) Do not travel at peak hours and seasons if at all possible.
- (9) Carry a small sign that reads, "Please be patient. My () has memory loss/Alzheimer's disease" to alert others of your special situation.
- (10) If the AD patient is of the opposite sex and in a public restroom, ask someone to look in on him or her if it seems like it's taking a long time. Or place an "Occupied" sign on the door.
- (11) Be patient. Reassuring the traveler with memory loss may mean reminding him or her repeatedly of where he or she is going.

Readers, for more valuable tips and suggestions, call the Alzheimer's Association toll-free at (800) 272-3900. Someone will be there to help you 24/7.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



Beyonce goes from solo back to trio

Beyonce will put her recently launched career as a solo artist on the back burner as she returns to her role as lead singer of Destiny's Child and starts work on the trio's next album.

Because she had recorded close to four dozen songs while working on her hit solo debut album "Dangerously in Love,"

there have been reports she would put out a second solo album this spring.

But a spokesman for her record label, Columbia Records, on Wednesday said the reports were inaccurate and that Destiny's Child would begin recording its next album in March, with release targeted for

late summer or early fall.

"Dangerously in Love" has sold almost 2.6 million copies in the United States since it came out in June, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and generated six Grammy nominations, putting her in a four-way tie for the most nominations in this year's competition. (AP)

'Idol' star gives to alma mater



AP
Pop star Clay Aiken is seen during commencement ceremonies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in this Saturday, Dec. 20, 2003 file photo.

"American Idol" star Clay Aiken returned to his alma mater to present a \$20,000 donation to the school and perform during halftime at a men's basketball game.

The game between the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and East Carolina on Saturday was the first sellout of the season, and hundreds of teenage fans were waving signs in Aiken's honor.

Aiken, wearing jeans and a green No. 49 Charlotte basketball jersey with Aiken on

the back, performed "The Way" and "Invisible" at halftime of Charlotte's 81-65 win over East Carolina.

"It's great to be back here," Aiken told the crowd of 9,105. Aiken waived his appearance fee in exchange for the donation, was paid by private sponsors.

Aiken, who was runner-up in the popular "American Idol" television show last year, graduated from Charlotte in December. His first album, "Measure of a Man," debuted No. 1 and went double-platinum. (AP)



Retrospective honors bombshell Kim Novak

Actress Kim Novak, the blonde bombshell who was a top box office draw in the 1950s, says she stopped acting because she was disillusioned by Hollywood typecasting.

"I didn't want to stagnate as a person. I wanted to keep developing," said Novak, who is the subject of a three-day retrospective by the nonprofit American Cinematheque starting Friday.

"I got more into my painting and artwork. I felt that at least I was growing ... rather than sitting around Hollywood and waiting for a good script," she said.

Novak, 70, who lives on an Oregon ranch with her veterinarian husband, last appeared on screen in 1991 in Mike Figgis' "Liebestraum."

She worked with the industry's top directors in the 1950s and '60s, including Alfred Hitchcock ("Vertigo"), Billy Wilder ("Kiss Me, Stupid"), George Sidney ("Pal Joey") and Phil Karlson ("Five Against the House").

Novak is scheduled to attend Saturday's screening of her most popular film, "Vertigo," at the Egyptian Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Morrison breaks leg

New Zealand actor Temuera Morrison broke his leg in two places in a motorbike accident, his sister said.

Morrison, 42, who appeared as bounty hunter Jango Fett in recent episodes of the "Star Wars" series, was recovering at home after spending five days in a hospital, Zella Morrison said Saturday.

Temuera Morrison also played Jake Heke in the 1994 New Zealand film "Once Were Warriors."

Doctors inserted two pins in the broken bone, his sister said.

"Fans don't need to worry. He'll be just fine," she said. "It's not going to threaten his career or anything like that." (AP)

Pastimes

WONDERWORD
By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BEDROOM FURNISHINGS

Solution: 7 letters

R D S N A F E J R L T N I A P

P E R F U M E C I F F O R R S

I S T T C W U G A T E I O A E

L K O R E E H U H P R S N D V

L N C L O T I Y C L S I U I L

O A R L S F D L E A P V K O E

W Y M O E U M T I U V E R S H

S C F P T A I O M N E L E I S

N A P S B U N Y C D G E S L T

I N U T S O P S O R N T S C S

A D T N E V Y O R Y U H E L E

T L E V R T R S K O O B R O H

R E A S D N I L B E L I D C C

U S M R A L A M S O G W A K E

C O V E R R S E O E R E T S

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Alarm, Blinds, Books, Boys, Candles, Ceiling, Chair, Chest, Clean, Clock, Comforter, Cover, Curtain, Desk, Door, Dresser, Dust, Ensuite, Fans, Futon, Girls, House, Iron, Jewelry, Lamp, Laundry, Light, Lounge, Naps, Office, Paint, Perfume, Pillows, Post, Radio, Save, Shelves, Shoes, Skirt, Sleep, Sofa, Space, Stereo, Study, Television, Time, Toys, Vacuum, Vent, Wake.

Yesterday's Answer: Oak Tree

To order the new WONDERWORD TREASURY 2 "Memorable Occasions," send check or money order for \$10.95 plus \$2.25 postage and handling (\$14.20 total) to Universal Press Syndicate, Attn: Wonderword, 4020 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call 1-800-451-7534, ext. 6613.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 "Fargo" actor
5 Retiring
8 In such a manner
12 Field parcel
13 Itty-bitty
14 Symbol of Ireland
15 Stage star
17 "— quam videri" (N.C. motto)
18 Chop
19 Tackle's teammate
20 "Poppycock!"
21 Play-ground game
22 Royal insomnia cause
23 Skirmish
26 Habitue
30 Wile E.'s supplier
31 Nail with a ray gun
32 React to yeast
33 The Beatles, e.g.
35 Betrayer
36 A billion years

37 Clear the tables
38 Elevator channel
41 Anti-quoted
42 Be a 15-Across
45 Jam ingredient?
46 Speculate
48 Composer
49 North Sea feeder
50 Algerian port
51 Nitwit
52 Fool
53 Polar explorer

DOWN
1 Numbers racket?
2 Longing
3 Staff
4 "Abso-lutely"
5 Play-ground favorite
6 Be in charge of
7 Longing
8 Roget's compilation
9 Heavenly — ice cream
10 Bear in the air
11 Gush forth
16 Moss material
20 Cribbage scorer
21 So
22 Energy
23 Common Web abbr.
40 On
41 Resistance units
42 Ethereal
43 Despot
44 Take care of
46 Earl Grey, e.g.
47 Plagiarize

24 Hosp. section
25 "Today Show" rival, for short
26 Snitch
27 Cover
28 Simile center
29 Scale notes
31 Buddhist sect
34 Fan of Barney, probably
35 Martial art
37 Consecrate
38 Put into words
39 "Les Miserables" author
43 Despot
44 Take care of
46 Earl Grey, e.g.
47 Plagiarize

Solution time: 21 mins.

B M W A R M L A I D

R E E L B O A A X L E

A N D A C O D T E L L

G U S T O M A G I

I A M M A N T R A

B L A N K E T S Q U I B

A I D A G O D U R A L

S E E M S W O M A N L Y

T U N E U P E R R

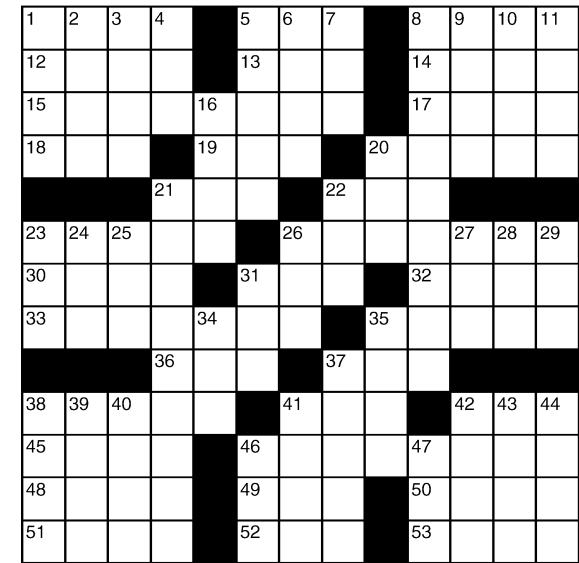
R E A D S T O L E

W A D I N O T E V E R

E P I C E M U R A N G

E T N A L E G L O O

Yesterday's answer 1-13



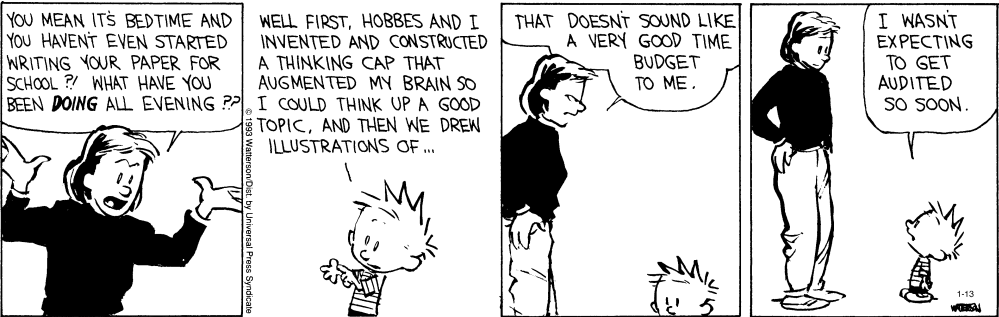
STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Ziggy®



Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Watterson



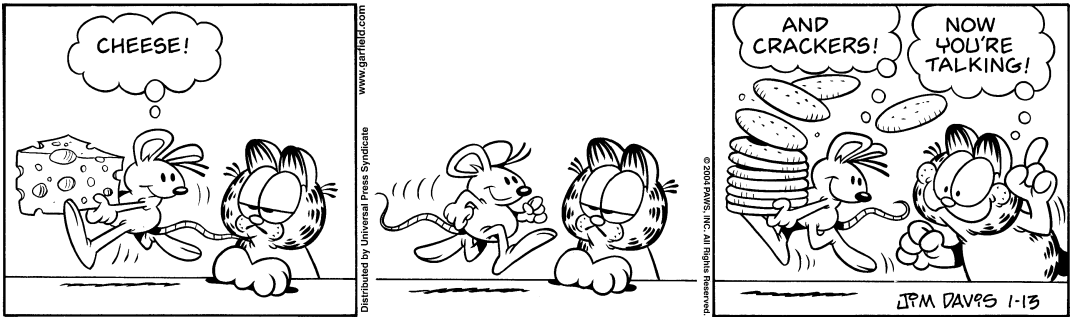
Adam@home

By Brian Basset



Garfield®

by Jim Davis




The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



Perry leads Memorial going into final

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER

 **DUBLIN, Ohio (AP)** — Another brutal Saturday at Muirfield - in Ohio, not Scotland - was too much for Tiger Woods.

But not for Kenny Perry. Despite cold, whipping winds and the toughest weekend conditions at Muirfield Village in almost 20 years, Perry made only one bogey in a round of 2-under 70 and led Lee Janzen by two shots going into the final round. “That’s probably better than the 61 I shot last week,” Perry said. “The conditions were brutal. It was raw out there.”

Perry, coming off a victory at Colonial with a record score, again ended a solid round with a birdie on the 18th. His approach ran up the ridge, then trickled down the slope to 8 feet. He was at 13-under 203.

Woods, meanwhile, struggled with his swing and the gusts up to 30 mph made it look even worse. He hit a tee shot out of bounds for triple bogey and played the front nine in 42. He had to play the final four holes in 2 under to shoot 76.

It was his worst round ever at Memorial, where he is the only three-time winner, and at times it was reminiscent of his 81 in the third round of the British Open last year at Muirfield - with one exception.

“It’s a hell of a lot warmer here,” Woods said.

He wound up 11 strokes out of the lead - just like at Muirfield last summer - and no chance to catch the golf’s hottest players.

That’s not the case for a few others. Janzen, winless since his second U.S. Open title five years ago, holed two bunkers shots on the back nine - for birdie on No. 15 and for par on the No.



Kenny Perry, of Franklin, Ky., watches his tee shot on the par-5 fifth hole during the third round of the Memorial Tournament Saturday May 31, 2003 in Dublin, Ohio. Perry parred the hole.

17 - and had a 71 that left him at 11-under 202.

“I just wanted to hang in there,” Janzen said. “Regardless of what I shot, I just wanted to enjoy the day - kind of silly to enjoy a day like today - but enjoy that I play golf and I was near the lead.”

No one had a more enjoyable day than Jose Maria Olazabal. His bogey-free 66 was more than nine strokes better than the average score Saturday. That shot him up from a tie for 30th into a tie for third, along with Vijay Singh and Retief Goosen at 8-under 208.

Singh had a 72, while Goosen had three bogeys on the back nine for a 74.

Olazabal was the only player to break 70, and only 11 players broke par.

About two hours before the leaders teed off, the third round was halted for 46 minutes as a storm system passed. Left behind was the nastiest weather of

the year on the PGA Tour, with temperatures in the low 50s and gusts that spell trouble along the tree-lined fairways of Muirfield Village.

“It’s hard to judge where the wind is coming from,” Woods said. “The thing that’s hard is to get committed over a shot.”

That was evident on the first fairway. Woods held his pose and followed the flight of the ball until it landed 25 yards short of the green. He looked at the treetops in frustration, trying to figure out the swirling wind, then tossed his club at the bag.

It would get a lot worse, especially on No. 6 when Woods pulled his tee shot through the trees, into a backyard and out of bounds by about 2 feet. He walked all the way up to his ball before being told it was not in play, then had to return to the tee.

He wound up with a triple bogey

and made the turn in 42.

Woods couldn’t turn anywhere for sympathy. Eleven players shot 80 or worse, the highest number on the weekend ever at the Memorial.

John Daly drove the 343-yard 14th hole for the third straight day, and this time got a birdie. He also had two triple bogeys and a quadruple bogey for an 83.

“It’s a survival course more than anything out there,” Ernie Els said after his 70. “It’s pretty

punishing. It’s the hardest day we’ve had on the tour to date.”

That’s what made Olazabal’s round so brilliant.

The field average was 75.5, the highest for a weekend round since 1981 at Muirfield Village, and Olazabal made it look like he was at the Bob Hope Classic.


“It’s as good a round as I’ve seen in a long time,” said Jeff Sluman, his playing partner. “I’m not unhappy with my 72, but after looking at Ollie’s round, it felt like a million.”

Ohio tends to bring out the best in Olazabal. He shot a 61 up the road at Firestone in 1990 when he won the World Series of Golf, and took just as much pleasure out of this 66.

“Here, it’s a different story,” Olazabal said. “To shoot 66, I think it’s really close to that 61.”

It got him a lot closer to the lead,

San Diego Padres nip Diamondbacks, 8-7

 **SAN DIEGO (AP)** — Pinch-hitter Lou Merloni drove in the go-ahead run in San Diego’s two-run eighth inning with a sacrifice fly, lifting the Padres to an 8-7 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Saturday night.

Merloni’s sacrifice fly off Oscar Villarreal, Arizona’s third pitcher in the inning, gave San Diego just its sixth win in 33 games. The Padres went 5-24 in May, their worst month in team history.

Mark Loretta’s pinch-hit single of Mike Myers scored Gary Matthews Jr., who singled off Scott Service (0-1), tied it at 7-all.

Luis Gonzalez drove in four runs for Arizona and Alex Cintron went 3-for-4, including a two-run double in the top of the eighth inning. Cintron had two doubles and a triple.

Trailing 6-4 in the eighth inning, Arizona rebounded with back-to-back doubles by Matt Williams and Cintron off Jesse Orosco (1-1).

Matt Herges pitched the ninth for his second saves in three opportunities.

The Diamondbacks’ rally started off Luther Hackman, who hit Junior Spivey



San Diego Padres’ Rondell White is tagged out by Arizona Diamondbacks catcher Rod Barajas after he tried to score from third on a flyball to left in seventh inning of their game Saturday night, May 31, 2003, in San Diego. Umpire Phil Cuzzi makes the call.

leading off the eighth. Mark Grace’s one-out single knocked out Hackman.

Williams, pinch-hitting for Tony Womack, doubled into the left-field corner off Orosco, scoring Spivey and cutting the lead to 6-5. Cintron then ripped a double into the left-center field gap to put Arizona ahead.

Gonzalez hit a two-run homer in the

first inning and threw out a runner at home plate.

Ryan Klesko homered and drove in two runs for the Padres, who scored five runs in the first after Arizona went up 2-0.

Klesko contributed an RBI single in the first, and hit his 10th home run of the season, a solo shot with two

outs, to put San Diego ahead 6-2 in the third inning.

Bennett’s two-run single capped the five-run first inning off Arizona starter Elmer Dessens when the Padres amassed a season-high seven hits. Xavier Nady and Matthews Jr. also drove in a run apiece.

Dessens settled down after the rough first inning. The right-hander allowed one run on four hits over the next four innings. Dessens finished by allowing six runs and 11 hits in five innings.

Gonzalez hit a two-run homer, his 11th, in the first inning off Adam Eaton, and cut the San Diego lead to 6-3 in the third with a run-scoring double that scored Cintron, who doubled.

After Eaton walked the first two batters in the fifth, Gonzalez added an RBI single. The Diamondbacks loaded the bases with a two-out walk to Lyle Overbay, but Eaton escaped further damage when he induced Spivey to ground out.

Gonzalez prevented the Padres from adding to their lead when he caught Nady’s fly ball in left-field foul territory and threw out Rondell White on a three-hop throw to catcher Rod Barajas.

MLB STANDINGS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Team	W	L	Pct	G
N.Y. Yankees	32	23	.582	-
Boston	31	23	.574	1½
Toronto	31	26	.544	2
Baltimore	27	27	.500	4½
Tampa Bay	21	33	.389	10½

Central Division

Minnesota	31	23	.574	-
Kansas City	27	26	.509	3½
Chi. White Sox	25	29	.463	6
Cleveland	21	32	.396	9½
Detroit	14	39	.264	16½

West Division

Seattle	36	18	.667	-
Oakland	31	23	.574	5
Anaheim	26	27	.491	9½
Texas	25	29	.463	11

Yesterday's Games

Detroit 4, N.Y. Yankees 2
Chicago White Sox at Cleveland, ppd, rain
Oakland 7, Kansas City 6
Toronto 10, Boston 7
Seattle 5, Minnesota 2
Anaheim 6, Tampa Bay 1
Baltimore 7, Texas 1

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

Atlanta	37	18	.673	-
Montreal	33	22	.600	4
Philadelphia	29	25	.537	7½
Florida	26	31	.456	12
N.Y. Mets	25	30	.455	12

Central Division

Chi. Cubs	30	24	.556	-
Houston	29	27	.518	2
St. Louis	27	27	.500	3
Cincinnati	26	29	.473	4½
Pittsburgh	24	30	.444	6
Milwaukee	21	34	.382	9½

West Division

San Francisco	34	20	.630	-
Los Angeles	31	24	.564	3½
Colorado	27	29	.482	8
Arizona	25	30	.455	9½
San Diego	16	40	.286	19

Yesterday's Games

N.Y. Mets 4, Atlanta 2
Chicago Cubs 1, Houston 0, 16 innings
Pittsburgh 4, St. Louis 3
Florida 3, Cincinnati 2
Montreal at Philadelphia, ppd, rain
San Diego 8, Arizona 7
Los Angeles 3, Milwaukee 0
San Francisco 2, Colorado 1

Mighty Ducks top Devils 3-2 in OT

By ALAN ROBINSON
AP SPORTS WRITER

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)— Martin Brodeur showed he's not perfect, but the Anaheim Mighty Ducks still are in playoff overtime—and that's why they're still alive in the Stanley Cup finals.

Ruslan Salei scored off Adam Oates' faceoff win at 6:59 into overtime and the Mighty Ducks, taking advantage of one of the biggest misplays of Brodeur's career, beat the New Jersey Devils 3-2 in Game 3 Saturday night.

Oates fed the puck off the faceoff to Salei at the top of the slot, and Brodeur barely reacted to his one-timer as the Mighty Ducks improved to 6-0 in playoff overtimes. The Devils are 2-2.

It was essentially a must-win game for the Ducks, who played with the desperation expected of a team that trailed 2-0 in the series and almost certainly would have had no chance to raise the cup had it lost.

Ducks coach Mike Babcock joked that Salei is one of his hardest shooters, if not the most accurate.

"He can really shoot the puck. We always tell him shoot the puck on net once in a while," Babcock said. "He bangs the puck off the glass with the best of them."

Salei said the faceoff win was so clean, "You've got to shoot. So far, it's the biggest goal I've ever scored. We had to win this game. We had to get some momentum going. Now maybe it will go seven games, or six."



AP
New Jersey Devils' Scott Gomez, left, is congratulated by teammate Patrik Elias following his third period goal against the Anaheim Mighty Ducks in Game 3 of the Stanley Cup Finals in Anaheim, Calif., Saturday, May 31, 2003. Elias had an assist on the play.

Salei's goal was his second of the playoffs.

Game 4 will be Monday night, when the Devils can either take a commanding 3-1 lead or the Mighty Ducks will tie a series they seemed out of following two dominating Devils wins in New Jersey.

Overtime playoff wins have largely been responsible for Anaheim's remarkable playoff run, which began with three consecutive series-opening overtime victories.

Goalie Jean-Sebastien Giguere has been unbeatable in overtime, with an NHL-record overtime scoreless streak of 166 minutes, 4 seconds. He broke Patrick Roy's record of 162:56 early in the overtime.

Giguere turned aside 29 of 31 shots in by far his best game of the finals.

The Devils trailed 2-1 in the second after Brodeur lost his stick and couldn't defend Sandis Ozolinsh's seemingly harmless shot as it trickled in from the blue line.

"It happens to the best of the goaltenders," Devils coach Pat Burns said. "You don't think Patrick Roy ever made a play like that? It's not the end of the world. You're going to fault the goaltender for that? I'm not."

Babcock said the misplay gave the Ducks a huge lift.

"I thought that was the break we needed," he said.

But the Devils tied it at 2 when Scott Gomez deflected Grant Marshall's wrist from above the right circle past Giguere at 9:11 of the third. Gomez has two goals in the finals after

scoring only once in 16 games.

That might have won it had Brodeur not made a grievous mistake on a play that couldn't have been more routine.

Only 45 seconds after the Devils' Patrik Elias tied it at 1, Giguere fed the puck up ice to Ozolinsh who, draped by two Devils, pushed it toward the net.

Brodeur, positioned at the left of the crease, began to scramble over to play the puck, only to drop his stick. With Brodeur unable to defend, the puck trickled into the side of the net as the goalie dropped to his knees, raising his hand to his head in disbelief.

It was a perfectly awful play by the goalie who was near perfect for the first seven periods of the series.

"Obviously, they got breaks and that's what it's all about. They got them and we didn't get them," Burns said. "We had a great chance tonight (to go up 3-0). But it came down to errors and mistakes, like every hockey game does."

The maddening misplay at 14:47 of the second came slightly more than 11 minutes after Ozolinsh set up Anaheim's first goal of the series, by the infrequently used Marc Chouinard. That goal at 3:39 of the second ended Brodeur's scoreless streak of 143 minutes, 39 seconds, the second-longest to start the finals.

Ozolinsh shot the puck toward the net from along the boards, and it deflected off Chouinard's stick and past Brodeur to the glove side. The Devils scored the first goal in each of the first two games on their home ice, and the Ducks never challenged after that in either game.

Larry Brown to coach Pistons, AP learns

By LARRY LAGE
AP SPORTS WRITER



AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP)— Rick Carlisle sat elbow-to-elbow with the man who had just fired him, Joe Dumars. In a bizarre scene, talk turned to Larry Brown, who will become Detroit's next coach.

"If you think he's going to bring in a stiff behind me, you're nuts," Carlisle said Saturday. "He's going to bring in a big-time guy, and if he can do that he will have done his job."

Carlisle was fired with one year and \$2 million left on his contract despite winning two straight division titles, 100 regular-season games, a Coach of the Year award and leading the Pistons to the Eastern Conference finals for the first time since 1991.

He will be replaced by Brown, who has already reached agreement with the Pistons on a long-term deal, according to a source within the league with knowledge of the discussions between the Pistons and Brown. The source spoke to The Associated Press on condition of

anonymity, saying the hiring will become official on Monday.

Saturday's news conference was strange - Carlisle poking fun at himself during an opening statement, then initiating jokes and defending the decision when Dumars was pressed to explain the dismissal.

"The guy at the gate almost wouldn't let me in to my own firing," Carlisle said.

When Dumars said, "This is not a fun day at all," Carlisle quipped: "It's all right. You can have fun with it."

Brown resigned as coach of the Philadelphia 76ers on Monday after six seasons. The Sixers released him from a contractual clause that prohibited him from coaching another NBA team if he left Philadelphia prematurely.

Counting Detroit, there are eight NBA coaching vacancies.

When asked about Brown, Dumars said, "We'll be talking to him," adding that he has heard Brown's name linked to openings in Houston, Cleveland and Washington.

"This is not about Larry Brown, this is about Rick Carlisle," Dumars said.

Brown did not return two messages left by The AP at his home.

Philadelphia captain Eric

Snow understands why the Pistons are going after his former coach.

"With Rick Carlisle gone, it would be great for Detroit's organization if it was fortunate enough to get Larry Brown," Snow said. "He's a Hall of Famer who is a great coach and a great teacher that would make every one of their players better, and that would make the Pistons even better."

Carlisle, in his first head coaching job, helped turn Detroit from a lottery team into the top-seeded squad in the East this season. He was honored as NBA Coach of the Year for the 2001-02 season.

He led the Pistons to a 100-64 regular-season record and a 12-15 postseason mark over two years.

The Pistons' season ended May 24 when they were swept by New Jersey in the conference finals. Carlisle's coaching was publicly criticized during the first round when Detroit fell behind 3-1 against Orlando. But he turned to little-used Tayshaun Price and Mehmet Okur to generate some offense and help the Pistons advance.

"You can get into a conversation about what may or not be fair, or you can be excited about being at the peak of your career," Carlisle said. "I'll look

back and remember the good things and the things that were accomplished by a group that no one thought had a chance."

Carlisle was hired as Detroit's coach on May 25, 2001, after the team fired George Irvine following a 32-50 season. There was believed to be tension between Dumars and Carlisle, but both denied that was true Saturday.

Carlisle said he was unsure if he would pursue a coaching job right away or take a year off to be a television analyst.

"There was never any talk of an extension, there was none from me to Joe, or from them to me. I didn't feel that one was owed to me," Carlisle said. "I was ready to honor the last year of my contract and be judged after three years. That would've been fine."

Brown, 62, had two years left in his contract that paid him \$6 million per season in Philadelphia.

He also coached Denver (five years), Indiana (four years), San Antonio (3 1/2 years), New Jersey (two years), Carolina of the ABA (two years) and the Clippers (18 months).

Brown's tenure with the Sixers was his longest in his 31-year coaching career. He led the Sixers to the playoffs for five straight seasons, including the 2001 NBA Finals, and will coach



AP
Philadelphia 76ers head coach Larry Brown directs his team in the first quarter in this April 15, 2003 photo, in Chicago against the Chicago Bulls. The Detroit Pistons fired coach Rick Carlisle and will hire Larry Brown, a source within the league said Saturday, May 31, 2003.

the U.S. men's national team this summer at an Olympic qualifying tournament in Puerto Rico.

He has a 879-685 record in the NBA, and 1,285-853 overall, including ABA and college. Brown won an NCAA championship with Kansas in 1988, and became the first coach to take six NBA teams to the playoffs when the 76ers made it in 1999.

Brown would inherit a

Pistons team that has the No. 2 pick in the June 26 draft. Detroit will likely select a scorer - Darko Milicic of Serbia or Syracuse's Carmelo Anthony - to complement a young nucleus of Richard Hamilton, Chauncey Billups, Ben Wallace and rookies Okur and Prince.

Brown's brother, Herb, was head coach of the Pistons from 1975-76 through 1977-78.





Mobil blasts past PDI
Host Mobil Oil was armed and dangerous last Thursday as they gunned down Pacific Development Inc, 103-68, in the second day of competition in the Mobil Oil Invitational Basketball Tournament.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Arenas leads Warriors past Jazz, 108-95

Gilbert Arenas scored 27 points and the Golden State Warriors beat the Utah Jazz 108-95 Saturday night to win for the fifth time in six games.

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